

STEPS UNTO HEAVEN

N. C. CARPENTER



Class BX 7327

Book C27S75

Copyright N^o. 1915

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

STEPS UNTO HEAVEN

BY

N. C. CARPENTER

With an Introduction by

T. S. TINSLEY

"There let the way appear,
Steps unto heaven;
All that Thou sendest me,
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to Thee."

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever
believeth may in him have eternal life."—JOHN 3:14

Revised Edition



BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1915

BX 7327

.C27S75

1915

COPYRIGHT, 1915

SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY

\$1.25

SEP 24 1915
© Cl. A 410627

220-1,

TO
MY DARLING SISTER
MAY

WHOSE PRECIOUS LIFE HAS
BEEN AN ENCOURAGEMENT
TO ME IN DOING RIGHT, AND
WHO NOW AWAITS MY COM-
ING IN HEAVEN, THIS VOL-
UME IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

PREFACE

In fulfilling the task of adding another volume to our sermonic literature, I feel it to be a duty to state the spirit that has guided me in carrying it to a conclusion.

I believe that every Christian ought to be a zealous student of the Word of God. In fact, the Christian is commanded to have the Scriptures dwelling in him richly. Obedience to this command necessitates careful study of the Bible. "Study to show thyself approved unto God; a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." Full compliance with this precept can only be had by close study of the teachings of Christ, the apostles, and the prophets. Any book that will aid its readers to a higher appreciation of the Word of God, or that will strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and lead them to more serious thinking and to holier living, has a right to appear and claim a place before the reading public.

Believing that those who read this volume thoughtfully will have a higher appreciation of the Word of God, a stronger faith in Jesus Christ, better ears, keener eyes, deeper hearts, cleaner hands and holier souls, the author modestly offers it to

PREFACE

all classes of readers, and in so doing he confidently looks for some degree of appreciation from those who read carefully and with a desire to know more of the spirit of the Master!

Finally — I send these pages forth, praying that they may be blessed to aid the cause of truth and righteousness, and that he in whose name and for whose glory they are written may, of his great mercy,

“Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in his wisdom make me wise.”

N. C. C.

Fayette, Ohio.

INTRODUCTION

To preach! Nothing else like it on earth! Nothing like it in heaven! It is to "speak for God"—to become a voice for God's truth and God's love. More: it is to see God, to reveal God, to give God to the world. God in Christ! God in the Gospel! God in the heart and voice and soul of the preacher!

The preacher is unique. That which makes him is different—different from the making in every other workman. That which the preacher makes is different—different from the products of any other calling. The preacher is made by agencies both scrutable and inscrutable. The discernible things that give form to his calling are not so fundamental as the things known only to God. I believe in the divinity of all men with still a plus to the preacher.

The *products* of the preacher are unique. Some of the things he must do are natural; others are, at least, *above* nature, if we may not say supernatural. He must build his church as a business man builds his trade, but he also builds above the sky line of human commerce. Part of his building is seen on earth but the sculptured frieze and

INTRODUCTION

gable are above the earth cloud line and are to be seen only in heaven!

N. C. Carpenter is a preacher. His people know it. His sermons prove it! Best of all, the souls converted to Christ and saved from the power of sin record it not only on the consciousness of his large and growing circle of Christian associates, but also on the unforgetting heart of God in heaven.

T. S. TINSLEY.

Midway, Kentucky.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I STEPS UNTO HEAVEN	1
II WHOSE SON IS HE?	20
III GOD AND THE SINNER	31
IV THE HOME OF THE SOUL	41
V THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPEL	54
VI THE GREATER WORKS	65
VII RISEN OR STOLEN — WHICH?	76
VIII THE AWAKENING OF A SOUL	89
IX THE SPIRIT OF OUR MASTER	102
X THE SOUL'S PHYSICIAN	112
XI THE PRE-EMINENCE OF OUR SAVIOUR	131
XII THE WAY TO GOD	141
XIII THE PRODIGAL SON	153
XIV THAT PRECIOUS NAME	167

I

STEPS UNTO HEAVEN

“Beside all this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, courage; and to courage knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience Godlikeness and to Godlikeness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love.” (II Peter 1:5, 6).

“There let the way appear,
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me
In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee.”

The author of this stanza must have had in mind a great flight of steps on which the soul climbs unto heaven, and the text is the Scripture upon which I think the thought is based. In the text the apostle presents, as it were, a spiritual stairway extending from earth to heaven, and the chart before you will represent this stairway.

Naturally, before we are ready to begin the life march up these steps, or in other words, before this spiritual stairway is built, the foundation must be laid. What shall be the foundation? Paul says, “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Therefore, let us notice very carefully what is involved in laying the foundation, for the strength of the superstructure depends wholly upon the foundation.

I. FAITH. "But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6.)

II. REPENTANCE. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3.)

III. CONFESSION. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 10:32, 33.)

IV. BAPTISM. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16:16.) "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38.) "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) "Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death,

we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:4, 5.) "Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye also are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Col. 2:12.)

We believe into Christ, we repent into Christ, we confess into Christ, we are baptized into Christ. Thus he becomes the foundation upon which we are to build the stairway leading to God.

Now then, having laid the foundation, the apostle says, "Beside all this (that is, beside your faith, and repentance, and confession, and your baptism) giving all diligence add to your faith courage; and to your courage knowledge; and to your knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience Godlikeness; and to Godlikeness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love."

We are now ready to begin the ascent of this stairway. We are ready to begin the "Steps unto Heaven"—to begin climbing heavenward!

What, then, according to the text, is the first step? With what must we start? What is the first step we are to take after we become Christians? What is the first thing we need? These are a few important questions, and may be answered by saying:

I. THE FIRST STEP IS THE STEP CALLED COURAGE. The first thing the Lord would have you learn is that there is no room in his kingdom for a moral coward. You must be courageous!

“Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” Have moral courage to remain faithful among the unfaithful; godly among the ungodly; thoughtful among the thoughtless, and Christlike among the unchristlike! Be true as steel, whatever way the wind may blow. “Holding fast to the profession of your faith without wavering.” Stand for the right anywhere and everywhere! Let the world know that you stand for God and his righteousness!

“Do you think,” said Frith to the archbishop’s men that would have let him go, “that I am afraid to declare mine opinion unto the bishops of England in a manifest truth? If you both should leave me here, and go tell the bishops that you had lost Frith, I would surely follow after as fast as I might, and bring them news that I found and brought Frith again.” This man had courage to declare the right before even the bishops who opposed him. Here was a moral hero!

When the rulers of the people called the men of God “and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus,” they answered, “We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” And instead of being silent, they proclaimed Christ with added boldness. These men of God had real courage—the kind of courage that would make them bold enough and calm enough to act wisely. Their bravery was something more than bravado! In their conduct every mark of true courage is manifest.

They show that their course is not prompted by impulse or passion. Their souls are moved with deep convictions. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God judge ye." They station themselves on the highest ground, the sense of right! There is no other courage so lofty or so enduring as this. It steadies the nerves, keeps the head cool and the heart brave! It makes men masters of every situation.

Then, taking these apostles and men of God as examples, stand firm and tell the hissing world that you are a Christian. It will, perhaps, laugh at you at first, but when it sees that you are deeply in earnest it will turn, fall at your feet and beg forgiveness.

But a young man says, "I never did like to be called a coward and when I refuse to drink with the other young men, to go to Sunday baseball, to gamble, or in other words, when I refuse to do anything that I know to be wrong, they call it cowardice, and say that I am a coward." Listen, young man! If it takes courage to drink, be a coward. If it takes courage to go to Sunday baseball, be a coward! If it takes courage to do wrong, be a coward! Be called a coward all your life rather than a dead hero!

When "Pat" was called a coward for running away from the battle of Gettysburg when the first gun was fired he replied, "Faith, and I'd rather be called a coward all me life than to be a corpse

fifteen minutes." "Pat" was right! Be called a coward all your life rather than a dead hero! Doing wrong is one of the strongest indications that you are dead while yet alive.

Have courage to stand for Christ. What we need most is men with courage to stand up for the religion of our Master. When the church wakes up and every Christian is willing to speak for him, willing to work for him, willing to die for him, then Christianity will move forward, and the great work of the kingdom prosper!

A word further in this regard is to say that, as you begin the ascent of this flight of steps, you should be deeply impressed with the great truth that this is the most critical step in the journey, and that you need courage to say no to temptation, for

" You're starting to-day on life's journey
Alone on the highway of life;
You will meet with a thousand temptations;
Each city with evil is rife.

" This world is a stage of excitement,
There is danger wherever you go;
But if you are tempted in weakness,
Have courage, my fellow, to say no.

" The siren's sweet voice may allure you,
Beware of her cunning and art:
Whenever you see her approaching,
Be guarded and haste to depart.

" The billiard saloons are inviting,
Decked out in their tinsel show;
You may be invited to enter:
Have courage, my fellow, to say No!

" The bright ruby wine may be offered
No matter how tempting it be,
From poison that stings like an adder
My fellow, have the courage to flee.

" The gambling halls are before you
Their lights, how they dance to and fro,
If you should be tempted to enter,
Think twice, even thrice, ere you go.

" In courage alone lies your safety,
When you the long journey begin,
And trust in the heavenly Father
Will keep you unspotted from sin.

" Temptations will go on increasing,
As streams from a rivulet flow,
But if you are true to your manhood,
Have courage, my fellow, to say No!"

II. THE SECOND STEP IN THE SPIRITUAL STAIRWAY IS KNOWLEDGE. Of course, this does not mean secular knowledge, such as political or governmental knowledge, but a knowledge of the Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation. And I declare unto you that the ignorance regarding them is simply distressing. I think that I am safe in saying that there are ninety

million people in North America who cannot tell you where the Saviour was born!

A minister of the Church of Christ was once holding a meeting in the South. To test the congregation's knowledge of the Scriptures he asked everyone who had read the book of Samson to hold up his hand, and, lo and behold, an old-fashioned brother, a member of the choir right in the amen corner, lifted up his hand. The minister gently suggested to him that the book had not yet been published. The old brother's face turned red. The minister eased him down by saying, "You need not blush; you are the only man in this congregation who had the courage to vote." No doubt, there were others who thought they had read the book but who were afraid to vote.

On another occasion two men were very enthusiastically discussing religion on the street, and one of them said, "As Pharaoh said unto Noah, 'almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian.'"

"Yes, sir, that is right," said the other. Neither one of the two knew that it was Luke who recorded the Scripture referred to, and by the way, it was hundreds of years after Noah and the king of Egypt lived. Yet, it is just this kind of fellows you find discussing scriptural texts on the streets — fellows who don't know the first thing about it! I tell you, people, no wonder the apostle Paul said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman who needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

But some one says, "I do study the Scripture, but I cannot understand what the Lord would have me to do, and I believe he will save me on account of my ignorance."

My friend, be not deceived. "*The times of ignorance, therefore, God overlooked; but now he commandeth that they should all everywhere repent.*" (Acts 17:30.) Again: "*And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed: the way-faring men, yea fools, shall not err therein.*" (Isa. 35:8.)

If any man hath ears, let him hear. God has given you a mind with which to study the Scriptures, and if you are too indifferent to study them in order to know what to do to be saved, *you will be damned on account of your ignorance.* It is not a case of what you think, or of what some mere man tells you, but, to be very emphatic, *it is a what sayeth the Lord!* If he says you are going to hell on certain conditions, mark it down that you ARE going. On the other hand, if the Lord has said that you are going to heaven on certain conditions, mark it down that you are going if you comply with the conditions regardless of what the evil one may say or do!

III. THE NEXT STEP IN THE SPIRITUAL STAIRWAY IS TEMPERANCE. There are hundreds of people everywhere who have a false conception as to what temperance really is! They claim that

it is all right to do anything provided we do not carry it to excess — that it is all right for a man to drink provided he does not make a pig of himself. But let us see. I am sure that if I should ask for a definition of a drunkard that ninety-nine out of every hundred would say, “A drunkard is one who drinks to such an extent that he falls into the gutter and is carried by the police to jail.” Well, then, suppose I pick out a man in this multitude, and ask him how much he can drink and walk absolutely straight. He replies, “I can drink a quart and nobody could tell that I had taken a drop.”

And suppose I ask “John Brown,” the biggest sinner on the streets, how much whiskey he can drink and walk absolutely straight. He replies, “If I should drink one gill, I would fall into the ditch. One gill would make me dead-drunk.”

Now then, according to your definition, “John Brown,” who drank only a gill, would be the drunkard, while the man who drank the quart would be a sober man — a Christian gentleman.

Listen! “Temperance has to do only with the things that are lawful, things that are right.” Suppose you take your gun, walk out yonder and shoot a man down in cold blood. You might have killed ten men, but you use self-control and are temperate. Would you be a murderer? Most assuredly you would be a murderer. “Thou shalt not kill.”

Suppose you take God’s name in vain just once.

You might take it in vain twenty times, but you use self-control and are temperate. Would there be anything wrong in it? Most certainly it would be wrong. "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." You must be temperate in all things that are *lawful*, but if a thing is wrong within itself, then the Scripture would be, "Touch not, taste not, handle not an unclean thing."

IV. ANOTHER STEP IN THE SPIRITUAL STAIRWAY IS PATIENCE. No man or woman is equipped for life's duties and responsibilities who does not possess patience. Especially is this true of the person who is endeavoring to follow the Master. Somewhere I learned that Christian patience is waiting, and that it is much more than waiting; it is endurance which involves strain and trial. It is bearing a burden while you wait for the crown incorruptible. Indeed, patience is the guardian of faith, the preserver of peace, the cherisher of love, the teacher of humility. Patience governs the flesh, strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride; she bridles the tongue, restrains the hand, tramples upon temptations, endures persecutions, and consummates martyrdom. Patience produces unity in the church, loyalty in the state, harmony in families and in society; she comforts the poor and moderates the rich; she makes us humble in prosperity, cheerful in adversity, unmoved by

calumny and reproach; she teaches us to forgive those who have injured us, and to be the first in asking forgiveness of those whom we have injured; she delights the faithful and invites the unbelieving; is loved in the child, is praised in a young man; she is beautiful in either sex and in any age.

V. WE ARE NOW ON THE STEP CALLED GOD-LIKENESS. If this Godlikeness is to be something practical, something for our good, it must be likeness to God manifest in the flesh — likeness to Jesus Christ. Jesus himself says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He and his Father are one. Therefore, if you are Christlike you are Godlike.

Christlikeness means that you are to love and live like he loved and lived. This means that you are to love your enemies, and live for others. When they took up stones to stone him he loved them, and when they despitefully used him he prayed for them. The Lord here, as everywhere, is our pattern; we are to do as he did.

But I have talked to many persons who claim it is impossible for one to love his enemies. One old man said, "It was not intended that we should love our enemies. It is not in human nature." The old man was right. "It is not in human nature; but it is in Christ's nature, and it is in divine nature. And it is in the divine nature to impart it through Christ to those who claim it." You are to love your enemies, not only because it is Christlike, but because it is the way to subdue

them. By love a sincere friend can be made out of a most bitter enemy.

It is recorded of a Chinese emperor that when he learned that his enemies had raised an insurrection in a distant province he said to his officers, "Come! follow me, and we shall quickly destroy them." He marched forward, and the rebels submitted upon his approach. All now thought that he would take the most signal revenge, but were surprised to see the captives treated with mildness and humility. "How," cried the first officer; "is this the manner in which your promise is fulfilled? Your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed. And behold, you have pardoned them all, and even caressed some of them." "I promised," said the emperor, "to destroy my enemies. I have fulfilled my word, for see — they are enemies no longer — I have made friends of them." In loving his enemies this emperor was Christlike.

This Christlikeness cannot be attained suddenly — in a moment. You must grow into it gradually. It is an unfolding; it is a growth.

An intelligent physician was having trouble regarding his Christlikeness. He seems to have thought that he was making too slow progress in the Christian growth; that he was becoming like Christ too slowly. He decided to make his trouble known to his minister. He did so. The minister saw through it all in a minute, and to help him out of the difficulty the minister said, "I go

into the home of the father and mother after God has given them their first baby. To them that is the sweetest and brightest baby on earth. The father says, 'Say, who do you think this baby looks like?' And I confess that I never saw a little baby that ever looked like anybody; it looks just like a little baby. That is all I can see. 'Don't you think it looks like its father?' 'Not a bit; all babies look alike to me.'

"I come back when it is a year old. The baby does not look like it did a year ago; it does not look like anybody yet. I come again and it is five years old. He is a little boy wearing knee pants. 'Now, sir, who do you think he looks like?' 'Well, he may look a little like his father, but not much.' I see him again; he is fifteen years old. Now he begins to look like his father. The next time I see him, he is twenty-one years old. He stands right up beside his father, and is just as tall as he. He has a mustache, and I see that he is the very image of his father. But it took twenty-one years to get there."

So it is with the Christian life. When we were baptized we did not look much like God, but as the years go by, and we continue to climb this spiritual stairway, we become more and more like him, and eventually we shall see him as he is.

VI. WE COME NOW TO THE SIXTH STEP IN THE STAIRWAY. THIS WE CALL BROTHERLY KINDNESS. The new life which we find in Christ is necessarily a sonship. The soul that is born again finds

itself born into a family life, where it has duties to the father and to brothers. For these brethren we must have a holy concern. "If we do not love our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?" In times of persecution and temptation there are constant calls to brotherly helpfulness. This brotherly love can steady the feet that are sliding, and restore the fallen in the spirit of meekness. In family life the brothers are considerate and helpful one toward another. They stand by each other in time of peril; they defend each other; they carry one another's burdens. Each one is willing to sacrifice his own comfort for the comfort of his brother. Each rejoices in the other's success, and each lifts the other when he falls. And in the brotherhood of the spiritual there should be the same mutual consideration and brotherly love.

When it comes to the church, we find that it is impossible for disabilities, afflictions, or persecutions to come upon it without directly affecting certain individuals — those who have the church's best interest at heart. They bear the burden for the whole church, and, therefore, have a special claim upon the sympathy of their fellow members. Every member of the church ought to feel that he is a member in the great spiritual family, and that he is in duty bound to carry his part of the burden. This is an essential part of brotherly love. Many are too ready to say of the suffer-

ing ones, "They are stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." We should keep ourselves closely knit with them in brotherly love. If there are some in bonds for Christ's sake, the others should have a fellow feeling. If there are some weeping, the others ought to weep with them; if there are some laughing, the others ought to laugh with them; if a brother is hungry, feed him; if a brother is thirsty, give him drink; if he is naked, clothe him; sick, visit him; or in prison, go unto him.

Along this very line somebody has said, "As the spokes of a carriage wheel approach the center, they approach each other; so also when men are brought to Jesus Christ, the center of life and hope, they are drawn toward each other in brotherly relationship, and stand side by side journeying to our heavenly home."

Not only should there be this brotherly feeling between members of the great spiritual family, but each Christian should feel deeply interested in every individual, whether saint or sinner. There should be in his heart a passion for souls, and he should feel that in a God-given sense all men are his brothers — that there is a universal kinship. Therefore, we should ever labor to bring help and gladness to others, and, in the words of Sam Walter Foss, be a "friend to man."

"There are hermit souls who live withdrawn
In a place of self-content;
There are souls like stars that shine apart
In a fellowless firmament.

There are pioneer souls that blaze the path
Where highway never ran;
But let me live by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.

“ Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
Where the race of men go by;
The men who are good and the men who are bad,
As good and as bad as I.
And let me not sit in the cynic’s seat,
Nor hurl the cynic’s ban;
But let me live by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.

“ I see from my house by the side of the road,
By the side of the highway of life,
The men led on by the ardor of hope,
The men who are faint with the strife.
Then let me not scorn at their smiles or their
tears,
Both parts of an infinite plan;
But let me live by the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.”

VII. THE LAST STEP IN THIS STAIRWAY IS LOVE. This step brings us right into the city of God. One of the greatest sentences the apostle Paul ever wrote is found in 1 Cor. 13:13. “ But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” Love is the greatest because God is love. Then love is the greatest because man believes, but God does not.

When you look at love’s wonderful record, you

can better understand why Paul said it is the greatest. Every page of the Bible is a record of God's goodness and love. It was love that sent God walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, saying, "Where art thou?" When Israel forsakes God and goes into ways of unrighteousness, love is crying with a breaking heart for the wanderer's return. It was love that sent the Shunammite mother to Elisha, and love that sent the dear old father to the gates, saying, "O Absalom, my son, my son!" Or the story of Jacob grieving for his children — it was love that brought forth the cry of his heart, "Me ye have bereft of my children. Joseph is not, Simon is not, and now you will take Benjamin from me." And when we turn from the New Testament, we discover that love dictated the parables, love worked the miracles, love dealt tenderly with the sinners, love sent the Saviour to the seashore in the early morning, love drove him to the cross, love sent him back to heaven, and love one day will bring him back to claim his own! And it is this spirit of love that must win in the church and in every relation. If we have it victory is sure. Indeed, love is that which leads on reformation in the life of the sinner, inspires the missionary, and without which we are as a clanging brass and an empty sound.

" Had I the voice of Greeks and Jews,
And nobler speech than angels use;

Were I inspired to preach and tell
All that is done in heaven and hell;
Or were I to distribute all my store
To feed the hungry, and clothe the poor,
And give my body to the flame
To gain a martyr's glorious name —
If love be absent, still I'm found
A clanging brass and an empty sound."

II

WHOSE SON IS HE?

“Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David.” (Matt. 22:41, 42.)

Here is a question that concerns the divinity of our Lord, and upon which our salvation from sin rests. Thus, in view of this fact, and that there is a tendency among many modern thinkers(?) to take away the divinity of our Lord, it behooves us to study whether Christ is the Son of God, as claimed; whether he is divine and has power to save the world. If he is not divine, he has not the power to save, and we are foolish to depend upon him. But, on the other hand, if he *is* divine he *has power* to save the world, and, therefore, it is the part of wisdom to put forth our strongest efforts to obey him.

In order that we may decide whether Christ is the Son of God or not, whether he is false or true, let us make a careful study of some of the evidences found in the Word of God. We do not care to use any evidences outside of the Word of God for the reason that those found therein are

authentic and trustworthy! The Bible is supreme authority on every subject it touches, and is, therefore, the only source of evidence we need in the argument.

The first evidence introduced is what may be called:

I. PROPHECIC EVIDENCE. This prophetic evidence runs back as far as four thousand years before the Saviour was born, and embraces the prophecies relating to his progenitors, his nativity, his childhood, his ministry, his character, his office, his suffering, his death, and his glorification. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:5.) "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gates of the enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22:17, 18.) "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Mic. 5:1.) "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and the kings to the brightness of thy rising. All they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." (Isa. 60:3, 6.) "A voice was heard in

Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not." (Jer. 31:15.) "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." (Isa. 9:2.) "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." (Isa. 35:5, 6.) "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground, he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." (Isa. 53:2.) "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2:3.) "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isa. 61:1.) "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him ye shall hearken." (Deut. 18:15.) "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off my hair: I hid not my face from

shame and spitting." (Isa. 50:6.) "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth." (Isa. 53:7.) "They pierced my hands and my feet." (Psalms 22:16.) "I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads." (Psalms 109:9.) "They gave me also gall for my meat: and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (Psalms 69:21.) "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken." (Psalms 34:20.) "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit found in his mouth." (Isa. 53:9.) "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in." (Psalms 24:7.)

These are only a few of the hundreds of prophecies that were uttered through the gift of superhuman foresight. Indeed, the Old Testament contains a very large predictive element. A stream of prophecy runs through the Old Testament Scriptures. The Hebrew prophets ever looked forward to a grand future—to the time when there was a great leader, guide, prince and Saviour to appear, under whom the kingdom of God was to become universal. They saw that righteousness and blessing were to attend its progress, and their insight into the plan of God has

been verified in the events of subsequent ages, down to the present time.

To make this part of the argument perfectly plain, let us suppose that here are five men standing in a row. In the hand of each man there is placed a bow and one hundred arrows. Out yonder in the darkness is a target. Neither man knows exactly where it is; all that he knows is that somewhere in that space of inky darkness there is a target. The first man, endeavoring to hit the unseen target, stands fifteen hundred yards away and sends one hundred arrows out into the darkness. The second man advances five hundred yards and sends his one hundred arrows forward. Then the third man advances seven hundred yards and sends one hundred arrows forth. Next, the fourth man steps forward nine hundred yards and shoots the one hundred arrows that were given to him. The fifth man advances eleven hundred yards and tries his hand at the target. Each of the five men have shot one hundred arrows forward. In all, five hundred arrows have gone out in search of the unseen target. The darkness clears away, and lo and behold, there are five hundred arrows in the heart of the target! Under such circumstances, what would you say guided those arrows; what power directed their course? There can be but one explanation! They were guided by the hand of Almighty God!

Coming to these prophetic arrows we find five hundred of them centered in Jesus Christ. These

prophetic arrows were sent forth by Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Malachi, and others of equal powers. Standing at different stations, they sent their prophecies forward, and we find them fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In view of this, we necessarily conclude that the hand of God directed them. Therefore, to my mind these prophetic utterances are among the strongest evidences in support of the proposition that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God!

II. LET US NOW TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE EVIDENCE FURNISHED BY THE ANGEL GABRIEL. Bearing the incense in a large vessel of gold, Zacharias, the priest, entered into the Holy Place, and was kindling it on the Golden Altar, when he was accosted by an angel standing at the right of the Altar. At the sight of the angel he was very much frightened. But the angel calmed his fears, and announced that the prayers he had offered to God in secret had been heard. Though Elizabeth was stricken in years, she should yet become the mother of a son who was to be named John, and who would be the immediate forerunner of the long expected Messiah, and *make ready the people prepared for him.*

Six months after his appearance to Zacharias in the Temple, the same angel was sent from God to Nazareth. At this village lived a lowly virgin named Mary. *To this lowly virgin the angel Gabriel now appeared and announced that by virtue of the operation of the Holy Ghost she should*

become the mother of a Son, whom she was to call Jesus. He should be great, and should be called the Son of the Highest, and should sit on the throne of his father David, and reign over the house of Jacob forever. Though at first startled at the sudden address of an angelic messenger, she received his announcement with implicit faith, and prayed that it might be according to his word.

III. NEXT WE NOTICE THE TESTIMONY OF THE ANGELS, SIMEON, ANNA, AND THE MAGI. On the bleak downs of Bethlehem shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks, when suddenly there came upon them a light brighter than the brightest of the countless stars that spangled the midnight sky, and the *glory of the Lord shone round about them.* (Luke 2:9.) Sore afraid, they would have fled in dismay. But a voice came to them and announced the glad tidings that in the city of David had been born to them a *Saviour, even Christ the Lord, whom they would find wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.* (Luke 2:11, 12.) The angel ceased speaking, and then a multitude of the heavenly host brake the silence of the night, *and sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."* Such an announcement roused all the wonder of the simple, humble men who heard it. Hastily leaving their flocks, they repaired to Bethlehem, where *they found the babe lying in the manger,* and recounted all that they had heard from the heavenly visitants concerning the child.

Great was the astonishment of those who listened to their tale; but the holy mother kept all their words in her heart, and the shepherds returned to their lowly occupation, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard. (Luke 2:16-20.)

At this time there was living at Jerusalem a *just and devout man* named Simeon. Though far advanced in years, he had received divine intimation that he should not see death till his eyes had rested on the Lord's Christ. He was present when the parents of Jesus brought in the child *to do for him after the custom of the Law*, and no sooner did his eyes fall upon the child than he saw that the Messiah had come. He *took* him up in his arms, and blessed God that his eyes had been permitted to see *his salvation, the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel*. (Luke 2:38.) At the same time there came forward an aged woman, a prophetess, whose name was Anna. She too drew near while the holy child was being brought into his Father's house, and, like the aged Simeon, *gave thanks to God, and spake of him to all those that were looking for the redemption in Jerusalem*. (Luke 2:38.)

But as she was thus proclaiming to the faithful in the Holy City the advent of their King, pilgrims and worshippers were drawing near from far different and far distant lands. These strange travelers were the magi, who declared that

they had seen *his star in the east, and had come to worship him*. By this time the babe had been taken to a *house*, and with great joy they entered the house, and *gave gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh*.

IV. IN THE FOURTH PLACE LET US NOTICE THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLE PETER. From Bethsaida, in company with his apostles, Jesus set out in a northerly direction, and traveling along the eastern banks of the Jordan and beyond the waters of Meron, reached the confines of the villages of Cæsarea Philippi. In this neighborhood, on one occasion, the apostles found their Master engaged in solitary prayer, a solemn and significant action, the precursor of not a few important events, as now of a deeply momentous revelation. For as they resumed their journey, he addressed to them the formal inquiry, "*Whom do men say that I am?*"

Thinkers have long since agreed that this was not an ordinary question. He was speaking to those who had now for some time been his constant companions, hearers of his words, and eye-witnesses of the signs which accompanied them. He seems to have wished to ascertain from their own lips the results of those labors, which now, in one sense, were drawing to a close, and thence to pass on to other and more painful truths which he had to communicate to them. To this inquiry, then, the apostles replied in words that reflected the various opinions then held amongst the peo-

ple. They informed him that *some said that he was John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.* But the Master put the question direct to them: "*Whom do ye say that I am?*" To this Peter replied, "*Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.*" (Matt. 16:16.)

V. WE CONSIDER IN THE LAST PLACE THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHER. With three of the most privileged of his disciples Jesus retired to one of the numerous mountain-ranges in the neighborhood, not improbably on the summits of Hermon. From what Luke has written we infer that one reason for his withdrawal was that he might engage in solitary prayer. (Luke 9:28.) And that the apostles were wearied and oppressed by sleep, we infer that evening was the time of this retirement of the Holy One, the close, it may be, of a long day spent in going about doing good. While, then, they slept and he continued engaged in prayer, a marvelous change came over his person. (Luke 9:29.) His raiment suddenly became shining, exceedingly white as snow, and the fashion also of his countenance was altered and shone like the sun. (Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29.)

Roused at length by the supernatural brightness around them, the chosen three awoke, and shaking off their slumbers, perceived not only the mysterious change that had come over their Master, but that he was no longer alone! There were with him Moses and Elias. Nor did they only

see their transfigured Lord attended by these strange visitants from the unseen and unknown world, but they were privileged to hear their conversation, the subject of which was relative to his death at Jerusalem. (Luke 9:31.)

In the excitement of these moments the impulsive Peter would have made three tabernacles, one for Moses, and one for Elias, and one for his Lord. But this was not to be! While he was yet speaking there came a Voice from heaven, saying, "*This is my beloved Son, hear ye him!*" This was the Father's testimony. Did he acknowledge one not his Son? Do you think that God would leave a false impression on the minds of those apostles and upon the hearts of millions who have lived and died since then? God said, "This is my beloved Son." God *cannot* lie. Therefore, he is God's son, and the Saviour of the world!

III

GOD AND THE SINNER

The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (II Peter 3:9).

God has always been a friend to the sinner, and has made it possible for him to turn and live. He is not willing that any should perish. In his great wisdom and power he stretches opportunity of repentance to its utmost limit. He does not desire that any, yea, even the scoffers, should perish. He gives warning after warning, until the utter hopelessness of any further warning is made quite plain, and the cup of self-willedness and iniquity is quite full. Of course, God cannot save the sinner if he will not repent; it is impossible. Sin means condemnation, and if man will go on in sin he will be everlastingly lost. That it is not God's will that any should perish is proved by what he has done to save him — the provisions of salvation.

He has thrown about him innumerable Christianizing influences.

I. THE GREATEST INFLUENCE THAT GOD USES TO SAVE THE SINNER IS THE HOLY BIBLE. Our own Herbert Moninger, in writing of the

Bible's influence upon the world, said, "Wherever the Bible has gone it has sweetened the home, exalted womanhood, sanctified the cradle and redeemed man." Indeed, were it not for the sacred influence of the Bible, womanhood would be no more than "slavehood"! President Angell tells us that it is simply striking to note the position accorded to women in non-christian countries! Often, as he contemplated the wretched lot of women in Asia, did the pathetic words in which Goethe makes Ephignia pour forth her pathetic plaint spring to his lips: "'The condition of woman is lamentable.' Those words might be inscribed as an appropriate inscription on the gates of cities and on the door-posts of the houses in the eastern world. Woman is doomed in ignorance. She is the slave and drudge of man. Her mind is not deemed worthy of cultivation. I know nothing in all the East so painful to the view of men from a Christian land as the condition of woman." It is only where the Bible has gone that woman is recognized as a companion of man, and the only difference between the women of America, and those in China, India, Africa, and other heathen countries is that which the Bible makes. Take the Bible away and the women of America would be loved and respected to no higher degree than the women in darkest China! It purifies nations and saves them from eternal ruin! Not only is this true of nations; it is true of the individual. He does not get very far on the way from

God before he is confronted by the influence of the Word of God. With its warnings, with its invitations, with its pictures of God and his love, it stands as a great influence for good. A single verse of its sacred contents has frequently turned the sinner from the error of his way. Hundreds of men have been turned to God by "The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This precious Old Book influences and leads sinners from darkness to light; from death to life, and from Satan to God! Therefore,

"This holy Book I'd rather own
Than all the gold and gems
That e'er in monarchs' coffers shone,
Than all their diadems.

"Nay, were the seas one chrysolite,
The earth one golden ball,
And diamonds all the stars at night,
This Book were worth them all.

"Ah no! The soul ne'er found relief
In glittering bands of wealth.
Gems dazzle not the eye of grief;
Gold cannot purchase health.

"But here a blessed balm appears
To heal the deepest woe;
And those who read this Book in tears,
Their tears will cease to flow."

II. ANOTHER INFLUENCE THAT GOD HAS THROWN AROUND THE SINNER TO SAVE HIM IS THE INFLUENCE OF A CHRISTIAN MOTHER. Aside from the Bible, there is no power in the world so potent for good as a Christian mother's influence. The mother has an influence over the child's early life that none but a mother can have. A Scottish proverb that is frequently quoted says, "An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy," and it is true. In this great world of opportunity there are many callings in which a woman can make her life count for much towards making the world happier, better, and more Christlike. She may teach school, she may write books, she may go to the mission fields and do errands of mercy, but she can make her life count for most in the home! Her influence in the home is mightier than swords in shaping the destiny of nations. In the home worthy men and women are trained for the world's needs. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, led the *child* to the Lord. John the Baptist had a noble mother in Elizabeth. There was only one person on earth that Napoleon obeyed, and that was his mother. One time he was asked what he considered the greatest need of France and his answer was, "What France needs is more good mothers." Brandt said, "The first twenty years of my life were spent in the presence of a Christian mother, and her influence has always been before me, as a restraint from doing wrong, and to help to encourage me in doing right." Through life the

influence of a Christian mother is a benediction to any individual. And one might as well try to blot out the sun as to try to blot out the influence of a Christian mother. It is to be treasured and cherished as one of the richest and rarest blessings!

III. IN THE NEXT PLACE GOD HAS THROWN THE INFLUENCE OF KINDNESS ABOUT THE SINNER TO SAVE HIM. Mrs. Hedgeman said, "I expect to pass through this life but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing that I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." And Faber has well said, "Kindness has converted more sinners than either zeal, eloquence or learning."

Once I read a story which impressed me more deeply than any I ever read along this same line. A Christian lady, as I recall the story, was standing in a window that opened on Bleacher Street, New York. A degraded drunkard came down the street. He had been mayor of a southern city, but had gone to ruin through drink. He was an outcast. He had made up his mind to commit suicide. He started to the river, and as he walked down Bleacher Street, he turned into a public house and asked for another drink. Then he told the bar-keeper that he had no money to pay for it, and he came around from behind the bar and kicked him out into the gutter. The Christian woman, looking out of the window, saw the poor

wretch picking himself up out of the gutter, crossed over and wiped the mud off his face with her handkerchief, and then said to him, "Come over here. It is warm, and you will be welcome." He went over and sat down behind the stove. His heart was touched. The spark of humanity was fanned into a flame, and he rose to real manhood once more. Finally he was made manager of one of the largest publishing houses in New York City. One day he came to the lady who had shown him the kindness and said, "I have some friends down at the hotel. I want you to meet them." She went with him to the hotel, and he introduced her to his wife and daughter. They were refined, cultured ladies whom he had left and gone far on the road of sin. Kindness saved him!

"Do a kindness, do it well;
Angels will the story tell.

"Do a kindness, tell it not;
Angels' hands will mark the spot.

"Do a kindness, though 'tis small;
Angel voices sing it all.

"Do a kindness, never mind;
What you lose the angels find.

"Do a kindness, do it now;
Angels know it all somehow.

“ Do a kindness any time;
Angels weave it into a rhyme.

“ Do a kindness, it will pay;
Angels will rejoice that day.

“ Kindly deeds and thoughts and words
Bless the world like songs and birds.”

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF THE CROSS IS ANOTHER INFLUENCE THAT GOD IS USING TO SAVE THE SINNER. It is by the cross that Jesus draws men unto himself. Men are saved by the cross, for here the eternal sacrifice was made. To save is its power and mission.

Jesus said: “ And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” He was lifted upon the cross. It may be that there are hundreds of people who are slow to see the truth of the statement, but from that cross the drawing power of his dying love has raised literally thousands of lives from the mire of sin. A backward look over more than nineteen hundred years brings the multitude of sinners to the cross on which their Saviour is dying. They gather around it. On that cross hangs a man, the Son of God. On that cross hangs Jesus of Nazareth. On that cross hangs the best friend they ever had. They look upon the wounds and stripes. They behold the mock crown, and are shocked at the thrusting of the Roman spear into the Saviour’s heart, and the

stream of mingled blood and water that gushed forth. They shudder at the driving of the iron spikes through his hands and feet. They watch him bear the excruciating pain, and deep down in their hearts a still small voice reiterates the words of the prophet, "He was despised; and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgressions of my people to whom the stroke was due. And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit found in his mouth. Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He

shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with transgressors: Yet he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

"Lord, as to thy dear cross we flee
And pray to be forgiven,
So let thy life our pattern be,
And form our souls for heaven."

V. HIS LOVE IS ANOTHER INFLUENCE THAT GOD IS USING TO SAVE THE SINNER. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16.) In this verse God's love is revealed as the eternal spring of redemption. The world must understand that it was not from an unwilling God that mercy was won for perishing men. He is himself the source of all the mercy and goodness and love that has been showered on men, sinful as they were, through the long course of history. More than this: when man was lost God sent his *only begotten Son*. And the reception and the blessing of this heavenly gift is assured to those who *believe*. And those who thus receive Christ and his salvation are led ever more joyfully to understand the mystery of

divine love — to realize that he sent his Son into the world to bless and save it.

To measure God's love is beyond human possibility! The world itself could not hold the volume that measures his love. It is far beyond our slightest conception, and the only thing that poor, weak souls can do is to reiterate the words of the poet:

“ Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stem on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God would the ocean dry,
Nor would the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from earth to sky.”

IV

THE HOME OF THE SOUL

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2-3).

These words of Jesus, uttered just before he went to Gethsemane and the cross, contained those promises which divine wisdom saw that the disciples needed. They were soon to be left alone, and to go out into an hostile and ungrateful world to proclaim his message. Sorrow, hardship, persecution, toil, and unjust treatment of all kinds, from Jew and Gentile, awaited them. They were to journey from land to land, among alien people and strange scenes and circumstances. The sense of their loneliness was well-nigh breaking their hearts. Therefore, this sweet and tender promise was given to them. They knew that they could have on earth no abiding city, but, having this promise, they looked confidently for one in the future. Not only was this promise given to the few disciples who gathered at the Master's side when he made it — it holds good for all God's people in all ages and climes.

Yet, with these promises there is a disposition on the part of some to explain away the teaching concerning the heavenly world. They claim that it is a matter of speculative theology, and that we can have no certain knowledge concerning it. Hence we are driven to ask:

I. IS THERE A HOME FOR THE SOUL? Are we put in this world for a few years, and then lie down, only food for grave-worms — having no abiding place in a better, higher, brighter and happier world? Did God create us in vain?

In support of the proposition that there is a home for the soul, we cite the ground on which Jesus rests the reality and assurance of the heavenly world. It is on the fact of his own divine personality! He says, "*If it were not so I would have told you.*" This truth was the strongest argument he could present to the minds of his disciples. They *knew* him! The course of his life was before them, and they *knew* that he would not fill their hearts with delusive hopes if these things were not true. For three years and a half they had followed him. They had seen his wonderful life and the mighty works which he did. They had listened to his voice teaching profound lessons, and had seen the spotless beauty of his character, and had felt the power of his love a thousand times! Therefore, his "*if it were not so, I would have told you*" came to them with the force of a perfect demonstration! Then should such considerations have less weight with us? Should

they mean less to us than to the immediate disciples to whom Jesus uttered them? Most assuredly, no!

Further testimony in support of the proposition that there is a home for the soul is found in the words of the Master: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." He talked much about heaven, and rejoiced that he would soon return there. "If ye love me," he said to his disciples, "ye would rejoice because I go to my Father." On other occasions he declared that there was such a place as heaven — that there is a home for the soul. Did he tell a falsehood? Did he tell that which he knew to be untrue? Did he leave this earth with an untruth on his lips and a false message ringing in the ears of those disciples? Would it not be sacrilegious to even think so?

And still further evidence is found in the testimony of the apostle Paul. He saw heaven! He was caught up, not into the first or second heaven, but into the third heaven — the home of the soul! There he saw things not lawful for him to mention. His testimony is seen in the following language. "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not, or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one was caught up even to the third heaven." Who was this *man*? No Bible student thinks for a moment that it was any other than the apostle

Paul himself. This is an acknowledged fact among all scholars who have looked closely into the matter. Their decisions are the same. Thus we have, on record, the evidence of an eye-witness.

Another eye-witness is found in the person of John, the beloved disciple of the Lord. He, too, saw heaven. "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:1, 2.)

Indeed, if language has any meaning, the Word of God teaches that there is a home for the soul, and that it is a place — a fixed locality — just as any other place is a fixed locality! Is not this the natural conclusion that grows out of the following Scriptures? "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred, and his angels, and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven." (Rev. 12:7, 8.) "Lift up your heads, O ye gates: even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and let the King of glory in." (Psalms 24:7.) This passage from the Psalms is a prophecy pointing to the entrance of Christ into heaven. "I go to prepare a *place* for you." These are only a few of many Scriptures that point to the home of the soul as a *place*.

In view of the teaching of God's Word, can we doubt that there is a home for the soul? Can we think that there is no abiding place beyond? Most assuredly

“ there’s a home of eternal delight,
Where the smiles on the faces of Christians are
bright,
Where the angels of beauty, immortally bright,
Are floating forever on pinions of white.”

II. IN THE SECOND PLACE LET US INVESTIGATE
TO FIND OUT WHAT KIND OF A PLACE IT IS.

(1) *It is a place that is made glad by the very presence of our blessed Saviour.* He said, “Where I am, there ye may be also.” What myriads of souls have been cheered by these words since they were first uttered! In our Father’s house it will not be the associations of mighty angels, the water of life, the tree of life, the jasper walls, or the pearly gates that will make us supremely happy. But we will be transcendently glad when we shall see our Lord. To be in heaven is to talk with Jesus about the hidden mysteries, sit at his feet and know him as he is. Yes, the Lamb of God is there! Stephen said, “Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.”

“How know I that it looms lovely, that land I have
never seen,
When morning-glories and heartsease and unexampled
green,
With neither heat nor cold in the balm-redolent air?
Some of this, not all, I know; but this is so:
Christ is there!

“How know I blessedness befalls who dwell in Para-
dise,

The outwearied hearts refreshing, rekindling the
worn-out eyes;
All souls singing, seeing, rejoicing everywhere?
Nay, much more than this I know; for this is so:
Christ is there!

“ O Lord Christ, whom having not seen I love and
desire to love,
O Lord Christ, who lookest on me uncomely yet still
thy dove,
Take me to thee in Paradise, thine own made fair;
For whatever else I know, this thing is so:
Thou art there! ”

Then we shall see his face. There are many
faces in heaven we shall be glad to see — the face
of Moses, the face of Joshua, the face of David, the
sweet singer of Israel, of Peter, and other great
souls who devoted their lives unto him who
searches the hearts of all men, and confers all
needful wisdom and strength. I long to see the
faces of friends and loved ones. I saw these faces
as they glowed with health; saw them fade away
in the pallor of death, and it will be a great day in
my life when I shall see them again, but the great-
est joy will be to look upon the face of Jesus.

“ There is a face at heaven’s gate,
A face I long to see,
Lingering by the jasper walls,
And waiting there for me.

“ There is a face at heaven’s gate,
With smile divine and kind

For one who in this stormy world
Is left awhile behind.

“ There is a face at heaven’s gate,
It cheers me on my way,
And is that morning star that shines
Before the wake of day.”

(2) *It is a place of safety, rest and peace.* Here his people are safe. They are shielded from all danger as lambs in the fold. In the Father’s house, they are eternally safe. “ I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch *them* out of my hand. My Father, who hath given *them* unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.” (John 10:28, 29.) At the close of life’s day, thither the weary Christian directs his steps! A royal welcome awaits him, and he gains rest from life’s toil. It is no place by the wayside where our desires are satisfied for only a moment, but an house of many abiding places. It is here that the voyager rests from the fights with contrary gales. Here the Christian soldier rests from all conflicts with sin and every enemy of the soul!

(3) *Then heaven is a place where the inhabitants are like little children.* When the Master wanted to make a supreme comparison, he took a little child in his arms and said, “ Of such is the kingdom of heaven.” And again, “ Jesus called a little child unto him, and set it in the midst of

them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Lincoln, Garfield, Beecher and Moody were all lovers of children, and it is said that Charles Dickens wrote the following lines and put them in an envelope to be read after he was dead.

"Children — they are idols of hearts and of households,

They are angels of God in disguise,
His sunshine still sleeps in their tresses,
His glory still beams in their eyes.

Oh! Those shouts from home and from heaven!
They have made me more manly and mild,
And I know how Jesus could liken
The kingdom of God to a child.'

(4) *Again, it is a place of love and joy.* You are not to think that it is a *place* merely that is dear. It is because those whom we love dwell there. Here love binds every soul as one. Selfishness is forever banished. They are all glad in each other's joy. There is no place where love gains greater triumphs, where it shows more plainly its power. There it beareth all things. And remember that where love reigns, there is the purest and most lasting joy! In heaven "love never faileth"; and thus there is endless joy! These are some of the features of our Father's house — the home of the soul! But when all is

said, how feeble and dim are our conceptions of its eternal glory!

III. IN THE LAST PLACE — SHALL WE KNOW EACH OTHER THERE? There are many questions of great interest that confront us, but this is the most interesting, and one upon which there is much prayerful and sacred thinking. Why should it not be an interesting subject? There is no question that has power to stir our hearts more deeply than this. It fills our souls with deepest emotion. Where are our friends whom we carried out yonder and buried in a bank of flowers on the hillside? Shall we see them again no more forever? Are they lost to view forever? Shall we meet them again? Was our parting eternal? In the light of all this, could there be a topic of more absorbing interest?

In answer to this question, it may be remarked in the first place that:

(1) *Our life beyond will be perfected.* “Now we see in a glass, obscurely; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.” (1 Cor. 13:12.) And we know that we shall be like him even when the manifestation of the invisible takes place. “Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3:2.) From this passage we learn that Christ’s people shall be made *perfect* in him and in the Father. Now then, perfection does not mean

a loss of personality, for if our personality were destroyed, it would not be *we* who were perfected. Indeed, it is the personality which distinguishes every man as an individual. Therefore, we should look for the perfection of our personality rather than its extinction. Then clearer knowledge will mark the perfected man. "We shall *know* as we are known." The obscurity of the present will merge in perfect day. Things shall be seen and known as they really are, and not as they seem. Also, *memory*, on which personality so much depends, will be perfected. The Saviour remembers his own, and his own remember his atoning work, and in heaven they will praise him "who hath redeemed them with his blood." Too, they will remember their fellow pilgrims, and "know them when they meet." And as they are all united in Christ in love, sympathy and knowledge, so will they be united one with the other.

Now, having noticed some of the things essential to the perfected life:

(2) *Let us consider more specifically what the Scriptures teach concerning future recognition.* You recall that David's child was sick, and that he was simply distracted with grief. He could neither sleep nor eat, and all the elegance of his surroundings could not drive the shadow from his heart. Seven long days and still longer nights passed, and the child died. He hears the servants whispering and asks, "Is the child dead?" Their answer is, "Yes." Upon receiving this reply he

throws off, to a certain extent, his grief. What calmed the waves of sorrow that rolled across his bosom? What unseen power lifted up his spirit? It was the thought that he expressed when he exclaimed, "I shall go to him, but he cannot come to me." Was this a false hope that David's heart cherished? Was it an idle dream of his? Not so! Some say, however, that this is not saying that he would know the child. Poor consolation, do you not think, if this were not true? Do you not think that the same power that made him *know* that he could go to the child could make him recognize it in another world?

Another passage in the Old Testament which indicates this doctrine is, "Abraham died and was gathered to his people." The Old Testament is full of such expressions. Do you fail to see that Abraham was gathered to his people in conscious fellowship? If this passage teaches anything, it teaches that he went to join his people in, as I have said, a *conscious* fellowship!

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared talking with Jesus. And although they had been dead for centuries, Peter, James and John knew them. How they were able to know them we are not told, but the fact remains unchallenged that Moses and Elijah were recognized centuries after death — after they had passed into the future world!

Jesus at the grave of Lazarus said to Martha, "Thy brother shall live again." "I know he

shall rise again in the resurrection," she answered. The Saviour did not object to her believing this, but can you see how this would comfort her sad heart if she would not know him? If she could not recognize him, how would she know that he had risen?

The Bible teaches plainly that the angels know each other. They have names by which they are distinguished. Does not this imply recognition? We are to be higher than they, and shall we be more incapable of recognizing each other than they? Most assuredly not!

We recognize each other here, and the Bible is full of teaching that we shall know each other better. "Now we see through a glass, obscurely, but then face to face." Hence the hymn runs, "*We shall know each other better, when the mists have cleared away.*" Did not the rich man recognize Lazarus? Did not Abraham say, "Remember thou hadst thy good things" while you were on the earth? Did Jesus wish to teach a falsehood by this parable? I, for one, do not think so! One who reads the New Testament carefully cannot but see that everywhere it is full of the doctrine of future recognition.

Then again, future recognition seems necessary in order that we may enjoy heaven to the fullest extent. If heaven is filled with faces we cannot recognize, it will be a lonely place! We could not enjoy it to the fullest extent among strangers.

Somebody has said that future recognition

seems necessary to take away the individual's embarrassment when he enters heaven. But why be embarrassed? It seems to me that we would be embarrassed to feel that we had received a reward of which we were unworthy, and for which we paid but little!

To carry this thought a little further it may be remarked that one after another falls by our side, and we are left to finish the journey alone. Yet we do not cease to love them and to long for them. We love them very fondly, and put the question, "Is love of the Lamb so jealous and so strong as to absorb and consume all meaner passions, leaving no room for any but one affection?" The answer can be discovered only by putting another question. "Do we find that our love for Christ weakens our love for those who love him?" Do you think that those who love one another before they confess Christ love one another less after confessing him? Not so. It is emphatically the opposite. This love for Christ includes all that are in him.

" He who, being bold
For life to come, is false to the past sweet
Of mortal life hath killed the world above.
For why to live again, if not to meet?
And why to meet, if not to meet in love?
And why in love, if not in that dear love of old? "

V

THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPEL

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” (Rom. 1:16).

The word “gospel” means “good news” and is applied to the message containing the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This truth is very strongly set forth in the message of the angel, and also in the language of the Saviour. “And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid; and the angel said, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people.” (Luke 2:9, 10.) And then again the Saviour said, “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the *good tidings* to the poor.” (Luke 4:18.)

A careful study of the gospel reveals the fact that God was centuries unfolding it; only little at a time was made known, and this in different ages and in different ways. “God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers persons and in divers manners, hath at the end of

those days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things." (Heb. 1:1, 2.) To those who lived during the patriarchal age the gospel was preached in promise. "And the scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed." (Gal. 3:9.) Then as we study the Jewish institutions we cannot fail to see that in them we have the gospel plan foreshadowed in type. This is brought out very clearly in Heb. 10:1-10. In the prophetic age the coming of the Saviour and the establishment of the New Testament gospel was presented in prophecy, and still later we find it in prospect. The latter brings us to the time when John the Baptist was preparing the way of the Lord, and to the personal ministry of Jesus himself. "In the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born *King of the Jews*? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." (Matt. 2:1, 2.) John the Baptist had done his work and had been delivered up to those who were to end his life. Upon receiving the news of John's arrest Jesus began to preach, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17.) In the next stage of the gospel's development we find it preached in its fullness. This was after the death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and coronation of Jesus, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

“Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.” (Acts 1:8.)

Then the command was given to preach the gospel to every creature. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” (Mark 16:15, 16.) In obedience to this command, they went everywhere carrying with them the message that had been committed to their care. This is the message of which Paul spoke when he uttered the words of the text, “I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” At the time Paul uttered these words Christ and his followers were spoken of with derision. The early Christians were spoken of as “a sect everywhere spoken against.” But notwithstanding this was true, Paul was anxious to visit Rome that he might preach the gospel of the Son of God. At this time Rome ruled the world. Yet the apostle says, “I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.” He was ready to preach this gospel because he was not ashamed of it. When Paul stood up and declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel he made one of the bravest utterances that ever fell from the lips of man! He knew that that very

statement might cost him his life. He knew the circumstances with which he had to cope, and fully determined that all forces opposed to him must yield. And to the contest he went without a doubt. He was not ashamed of the gospel:

I. BECAUSE IT IS THE POWER OF GOD. The greatest word in the Roman's vocabulary was *power*! So in order to appeal to the Romans with the strongest force possible, he tells them that the gospel is *power*! Of course, you understand that power is of different kinds, among which may be mentioned material force, common both to brutes and men; mental force — the power to form ideas, or in other words, the power to reason. And then there is spiritual force or power. This power is one that we cannot fully understand. As Christ said to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This spiritual power is that which arouses the conscience, inspires devotion and reverence for God and for all that is holy!

Indeed, it is the *power* of God! In God we find the gospel's divine source. God in his own way prepared the world for it, and then in his own good time sent his Son to make it known. It is not enough to say that it is *a* power—"it is *the* power!" It is God's only means of converting the sinner from sin to righteousness; from darkness to light; from the service of Satan to the

service of God. The history of the victories of the gospel proves this statement to be in every way true. It has never failed to conquer and save either in former or modern times! There has never been a force that could equal it. It is truly the power of God. Most assuredly this must be pre-eminent power!

II. IT IS GOD'S POWER TO SAVE THE SOUL. All men were lost and ruined. Nothing but the salvation that God giveth could save them. God's power was needed more than everything else, and it was placed in the gospel. We are taught that the gospel alone contains this power. In its sweep it is as wide as the world. It embraces all nations, tongues and peoples.

All power is not saving power. There are powers that can be used to either curse or bless God. It requires power to spread licentious literature, to scatter broadcast that which is evil, and to shake man's faith. This is power used to curse God. Then, on the other hand, it requires power to heal wounded hearts, to bless your fellow men, and to help men to God. Thus only "the gospel is the power of God *unto salvation*"! This is the power that saves the soul! It requires this power of God to forgive sins. By the force of arms Alexander had power to subdue the world. Rome had power to make Britain tributary, to redden the Rhine with German blood, to stab the heart of Egypt, and to conquer Judea. But those powers could not forgive the sins of man! "Who but

God *can* forgive sins?" A chorus of a million voices cries out, "None but God can forgive sins!"

III. PAUL DECLARES IT TO BE A UNIVERSAL POWER. "To every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." This is one of the fundamental reasons why he was not ashamed of the gospel. He had confidence enough in it to believe that it would save the Romans just as it had saved others. Anywhere and everywhere it would exert its power. It meets the needs of man in every circumstance of life. It holds out an helping hand to all, white, black, brown or yellow! It has never favored a sect. The *world* is its home. It knows no distinction between the rich and poor, nor between the "classes" and the masses! It is for "the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Its universal spread is absolutely certain! All the powers of the Evil One waged against it cannot prevent it from going forth. For three hundred years the battle raged between Christianity and Roman paganism. At last one of the most hostile emperors was compelled to exclaim with a dying breath, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean." The time will come when the whole world will reiterate the words of this dying emperor!

IV. THEN IT IS A CONSTRAINING POWER. What is it that causes men and women to say good-bye to all that is dear to their hearts, and go into far-away lands and labor as missionaries? What makes men stand up before a hissing world, and

know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified? This is it — “The love of Christ constraineth us”! What leads the timid woman down the dark way to sit beside the poor victim dying in sin? It is neither gold nor silver. What is it? It is the constraining power of the gospel! What sends the martyr to the stake? It is the constraining power of the gospel of the Son of God! The gospel enables the individual to say, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though the fire devour this body, yet in my flesh I shall see the Lord.”

V. PAUL WAS NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL BECAUSE HE WAS NOT ASHAMED OF ITS FOUNDER. Though he was born in a stable; though there was no room for him in the inn; though he was the son of humble parents; though he lived in the little and despised village out of which “cometh no good thing”; though he was a root out of dry ground; though he was abused and rejected of men; though he was poverty-stricken, and without that which the world calls glory, Paul was not ashamed of the gospel he established. This seemed to be Paul’s chief glory! He was not ashamed to stand up and declare his faith in him even in Jerusalem, in Athens, on Mars Hill — no matter in whatever company or before whatever powers he was not ashamed!

“Ashamed of Jesus! Sooner far
May evening blush to own a star;
Ashamed of Jesus! Just as soon
May midnight blush to think of noon;

Ashamed of Jesus, that dear friend
 On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
 No! when I blush, be this my shame,
 That I no more revere his name.
 Ashamed of Jesus! Yes, I may,
 When I've no crimes to wash away,
 No tears to wipe, no joys to crave,
 No fears to quell, no soul to save;
 Till then — nor is the boasting vain —
 Till then I boast a Saviour slain.
 And oh, may this my glory be,
 That Christ is not ashamed of me."

VI. WE SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED OF THIS GOSPEL BECAUSE IT IS AN EXCELLENT GOSPEL. It is the glorious gospel of the blessed Son of the Most High. It is replete with pity and pardon for sinners, and filled with heavenly interest and glory. This excellence is seen in its revelations. It reveals the Saviour's love and the God of power. It is excellent in that it was announced in promise, in prophecy, in prospect, and in its fullness.

This excellency is also seen in its victories. Its founder was killed, buried, rose from the dead and gained the victory over death! He was caught up into heaven, and given a seat at the right hand of God. Then has not this gospel gained the victory over Judaism, paganism and barbarism? Did it not lead "captivity captive and give gifts unto men"? Did not it gain victory over sin? Has it not opened prison doors? It has done all this and more! It assures us of a final victory

over the powers of the Evil One, and fills us with the hope of joys eternal!

VII. THE FUNDAMENTAL REASON WHY WE SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED OF THIS GOSPEL IS BECAUSE SALVATION IS EXCLUSIVE IN IT. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him." His commission is, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." This is called a great salvation! Yet, though we have this emphatic teaching, efforts have been made to substitute other agencies through which salvation may be received. This, of course, would throw away the chief corner stone. Such efforts seek to substitute moral principles, science and philosophy, arguments and pretending philanthropy for the gospel plan!

It is claimed that human government is a balm for the world's sorrow and woes, but all history and experience demonstrates that this theory will not bring relief. It is true that it will restrain and protect, but it will not reform the life of the evil-doer! Law may control, but it will not save. If this agency is a balm for the weary, why did not the dynasties of Egypt accomplish more than they did? Why did the monarchies of Babylonia and Persia not succeed? Then, have even the more perfect governments proved a saving power? Our own government has not. The government of England has not. Look at the history of all gov-

ernments, and see if you can find one incident showing that civil laws have ever saved a soul!

The educator claims that a universal system of education is a remedy for sin. But did self-culture and education save Greece? Did culture save Byron from immorality? Did philosophy save Bacon from bribery? And then did poetry save Poe from intemperance? Were the Athenians free from vice? Not so! No agency foreign to the gospel plan will save the soul of man. It is absolutely impossible! If men will be saved we must preach the gospel to them. Indeed, we must

“ Repeat the story o’er and o’er
Of grace so full and free;
I love to hear it more and more,
Since grace has rescued me.”

And this gospel must be proclaimed in its fullness — its facts, its commands, and its promises — facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed! If this is faithfully done, men will hear it, obey it, and be saved by it.

“ O, what amazing words of grace
Are in the gospel found,
Suited to every sinner’s case,
Who hears the gospel sound.

“ Come, then, with all your wants and wounds,
Your every burden bring;
Here love, unchanging love, abounds,—
A deep celestial spring.

“ This spring with living water flows,
And heavenly joy imparts,
Come, thirsty souls, your wants disclose
And drink with thankful hearts.

“ Millions of sinners vile as you,
Have here found life and peace;
Come, then, and prove its virtues too,
And drink, adore, and bless.”

VI

THE GREATER WORKS

“Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” (John 14:11, 12).

The personal ministry of Jesus was given largely to setting forth the proof that he was the Messiah, the Son of God. The miracles he wrought while on earth were to bless humanity, and to prove his divinity. He wrought no miracle for the sake of miracle, to attract attention, to be seen of men, nor merely because he could do so, but that men might believe that his claims were true. “And many other signs truly did Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

When Jesus said, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also,” he was speaking to his disciples, assuring them that they should do works similar to those which he had done,

or in other words, they were to perform miracles similar to those which he performed.

I. LET US NOTICE BRIEFLY SOME OF THE MIRACLES WHICH HE WROUGHT. At one time when he was teaching in the synagogue, there was a man present possessed with an evil spirit, which, in the hearing of all, cried out, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Thereupon the loving Saviour, rebuking him and entreating him to hold his peace, commanded the evil spirit to leave the sufferer he was tormenting, and the demon, having thrown the man down, and "uttering an inarticulate cry of rage and pain, left him."

This miracle, the first of its kind over unclean spirits, was rapidly noised abroad throughout the whole region of Galilee. From the synagogue the Saviour repaired to the house of Peter, where his wife's mother lay sick of a violent fever, and taking her by the hand raised her up. Immediately the fever left her, and she was made whole.

Not only did the Saviour heal the sick, and cast out evil spirits; he opened the eyes of the blind. "Two blind men followed him, crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, thou Son of David, and when he was come into the house, the two blind men came in to him; and Jesus said unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto him, yea, Lord. Then he touched their eyes, say-

ing, According to your faith, be it unto you, and their eyes were opened."

Then again he raised the dead. "And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." (John 11:41.) Instantly the word of power was obeyed. There was a stir in the sepulchre. The dead man rose and came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face covered with a napkin, while the Lord, who was never more self-composed than when doing his greatest works, simply bade them loose him and let him go. Surely the culmination of his miracles was raising this man from the dead!

These works are worthy of the Son of God, not only because they were works of mercy and love, but also of superhuman power. Most assuredly, they contribute to manifest forth his glory. They were a necessary link in the chain of testimony which pointed to him as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. The remembrance of those mighty works, therefore, would make his words, "If it were not so I would have told you," more convincing and comforting. But here the Lord says that not only shall his disciples do his works, but "*greater works*."

II. DID THE DISCIPLES DO SUCH WORKS AS DID THEIR MASTER? Paul cast out an evil spirit. There are but few Christian people who do not remember the vision which appeared unto the apostle Paul in which "there stood a man of Macedonia

and prayed him saying, come over into Macedonia, and help us." Stretching his eyes across the Ægean Sea, from Troas on the northeast, to the Macedonian hills, visible on the northwest, the apostle could hardly fail to think this the destined scene of his future labors. Accordingly, he and his companions set sail from Troas; sailed to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, and here they tarried certain days. And on the Sabbath they went forth out of the gate, by the riverside, where there was, as they supposed, a place of prayer. "And it came to pass," says Luke, "as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same following after Paul and cried out saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation. And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out of her that very hour."

Then, Paul healed the sick. We are told that the inhabitants of Malta received the shipwrecked mariners, among whom was the apostle Paul, with kindness, and kindled a fire, which was most needful in the cold and rain. Paul was helping gather sticks, and had just laid a bundle on the fire when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened on his

hand. The superstitious natives watched and said among themselves, "At all events this man is a murderer whom, saved from the sea, justice suffereth not to live." But when, after Paul had quickly shaken off the reptile into the fire, they watched a long time in vain to see him swell and fall down dead, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. The incident not only gave Paul the ascendancy over the people which we well know how he would use, but it would naturally attract the attention of Publius, the primate of the island, whose estates were in the neighborhood. He received the apostle's party with courteous hospitality. "And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. And when this was done, the rest also that had diseases in the island came, and were cured."

Peter and John healed a lame man. They were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, "and a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that

give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk, and he entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God."

At another time Peter raised the dead. At Joppa, the ancient port of Solomon, lived a certain disciple named Dorcas, the name of whom has become the type of greater loveliness of that charity with which she clothed the poor by the labor of her hands. She "was full of good works and alms — deeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come unto us. And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him to the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter she sat up, and he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows he presented her alive."

Thus investigation discloses the fact that "the

works which Jesus did his disciples did also." Jesus cast out evil spirits, healed the sick, healed the withered hand, and raised the dead. His disciples did these things also. Surely then the "*greater works*" which he promised them that they should do were not performing miracles. It is thus that we are led to inquire:

III. WHAT WERE THE "GREATER WORKS" WHICH THE DISCIPLES WERE TO DO? Beyond a doubt, the "*greater works*" were the conversion of thousands in a day, and proclaiming the gospel in its fullness, or in other words, they announced the full law of pardon, which was greater work than miracles. When Peter preached the first gospel sermon under the commission, three thousand answered the first invitation, and already does he realize the "*greater work*" that had been committed to their hands.

Proclaiming the full gospel is greater work than miracles because:

(1) *It is the power of God unto salvation.* No one will doubt for a moment that God has universal and limitless power. Water is God's power to quench thirst, and food is God's power to quell hunger. Then God's power is manifest in the forces of nature we see around us. Every natural object declares the glory of God. His power is seen in all creation, but in the gospel of Jesus Christ is manifest the power of God unto salvation. Men have had power to conquer the world by force of arms. A powerful people had power to

render Britain tributary ; to paint the Rhine crimson with blood, but these powers were not able to forgive the sins of men. Only the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and when they were proclaiming it, they were doing greater work than working miracles — greater because the soul is greater than the body ; greater to feed the soul on the bread of life than to feed the multitudes with loaves and fishes ; greater to open their minds to see Jesus as their Saviour than to open the eyes of blind Bartimeus, and greater to raise a man from the depths of sin than to raise Lazarus from the dead. Proclaiming the gospel is greater work than miracles, not only because it is the power of God unto salvation, but because :

(2) *It is a satisfying power.* The achievements of man, as the world counts achievement, do not satisfy. Only the gospel will satisfy in the highest and fullest sense. It is the gospel that enables man to say, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though the fire devour this body, yet in my flesh I shall see the Lord.” It was this satisfying gospel that enabled Paul to say, “ I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.”

The preaching of the gospel produces love in

the hearts of men, which is greater than all spiritual gifts. We are taught in the Word of God that if we speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, we become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if we have the gift of all prophecy, and know all mystery and all knowledge; and if we had all faith so that we could remove mountains, and have not love, we are nothing. And if we bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and if we give our bodies to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth us nothing.

“Saviour! teach me, day by day,
Love’s sweet lesson to obey;
Sweeter lesson cannot be,
Loving him who first loved me.”

IV. CAN WE DO GREATER WORKS THAN WORKING MIRACLES? Indeed, I think the modern Bible-school is doing greater work than working miracles. Some one said that the Bible-school is the greatest work in the world, and Martin Luther said, “God maintains the church through the schools.” The Bible-school seems to have heard the admonition of Solomon, “Train up a child in the way it should go,” and has cheerfully taken the responsibility of religious training upon its own shoulders. Concerning the Word, God said to Moses, “Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.” Through every department of the Bible-school there is greater work than miracles being done.

Again, who can tell how far into eternity the in-

fluence of a consecrated Bible-school superintendent will extend? None but God can tell. Somewhere I heard a little story that serves this point. There was a New York superintendent who urged his teachers to bring new pupils with them the next Lord's Day, and as he walked down Sixth Avenue, attempted himself to win a street boy. "Will you go to Bible-school next Lord's Day?" In the vernacular of the street the boy said, "Nope." The superintendent said, "We have picture-papers for every boy." But still he would not come. "We have music, we have everything to make you have a good time," and the boy steadily refused. Disappointed, the superintendent turned away, and when he had gone a short distance he heard the patter of little feet behind him, and turning back he saw the boy. He said with an earnest, eager look, "Mister, are you there?" The superintendent replied, "Yes, I will be there." "Well," said the boy, "next Sunday I'll be there." And he was. That consecrated superintendent did a greater work than that of working miracles. I wish that we might follow his influence, and see the entire harvest which was reaped from his sowing. Is not the work of a faithful Bible-school teacher greater than miracles? The faithful teacher is one of God's best instruments on earth for the salvation of our children and young people. The inspired man of God said, "They that be teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that lead

many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever."

"The Sunday School Lighthouse shines out on life's wave,
It beams for all nations, their children to save;
Thro' Calvary's cross and thro' Bethlehem's cave,
The light shines from glory with power to save.

"The channels are narrow, sin's breakers are there,
Life's ocean is strew'd with wrecks of despair;
Then build up, my brother, no time for delay,
The Sunday School Lighthouse and save them to-day.

"The workers are needed, the teachers are few,
The Master, my brother, depends upon you;
Don't wait for some wasted life wreck'd on the shoals,
The Sunday School Lighthouse must save lives and souls.

"Where Unbelief's waves roll and storms are most fierce,
The Sunday School Lighthouse that dark gloom must pierce;
'Tis the gleam of that Star which at Bethlehem shone,
The Sunday School Lighthouse will light the way home."

VII

RISEN OR STOLEN — WHICH?

“He is not here, but is risen.” (Luke 24:6).

The resurrection of our Lord is regarded by all right-thinking people as the greatest and most important event that ever occurred. It is considered thus because if he had not risen from the dead our faith would be in vain, and the whole gospel a farce. Upon the resurrection of the Lord we stake our veracity, and if it is ever proved that he did not rise from the dead, then the apostles may be considered false witnesses: “We are false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised.” Indeed, the whole doctrine of redemption is inseparably connected with the resurrection of the Lord. It is the resurrection of the Lord that is involved in all our hopes of salvation from sin and of future happiness, for “if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, and our faith also is vain.” (1 Cor. 15:14.) Hence we can readily see the necessity of a careful and prayerful consideration of the subject of all subjects — the resurrection of our Lord.

Let us notice, in the first place:

I. THE RESURRECTION PRE-ANNOUNCED BY THE MASTER HIMSELF. The Master was not ignorant of what the future held for him. He knew that he must suffer, “the just for the unjust,” be “wounded for our transgressions,” “bruised for our iniquities,” “make his grave with the wicked,” and that on the third day he would rise from the dead. He knew that he had to endure what his disciples, at that time, could hardly endure to hear mentioned. But the Master was true to them, and wisely taught them concerning his death and resurrection beforehand. “Destroy this temple,” he said, “and in three days I will raise it up again.” Such a thought had never entered their minds! “What does he mean, and how can this be?” Listen: “I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again.”

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, but no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” “It shall come to pass that they shall deliver the Son of man to the Gentiles, to mock, to scourge and kill, and the third day he shall rise again.” Thus he taught, and thus his disciples were *partially* prepared for the tragic end of his earthly pilgrimage which was almost at hand.

In fulfillment of these prophecies relating to

his death and resurrection, he was condemned, scourged, crucified and killed. That the Master really died is a proposition in support of which there is proof in abundance. Aside from the proof recorded in the gospel narratives, it may be remarked: "If it were possible for him to survive the crucifixion, the prolonged torture, and the wound in the side, and if what appeared to be death could be supposed to have been only a swoon from which he woke, how could his life in a mortal body have been continued? Where did he go? When did he really die? Such a continuation of his earthly life, if all other difficulties in the supposition were removed, could only have taken place through a consummate effort of deceit at which he himself connived." However, the most trustworthy proof in support of the proposition above is that which is found in the gospel narratives. "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the Sabbath (for the Sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him: *but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.*" (John 19:31-33.) Again, in answer to the thief he said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." A short time after this he cried with a loud voice, "'Father, into thy hands I commend my

spirit': and having said this, he gave up the ghost." (Luke 23:44-46.) Thus the gospel narratives, their trustworthiness having been established beyond successful contradiction, furnish conclusive proof that Jesus really died.

Meanwhile, before the awful news of the Saviour's death could reach the ears of Pilate, Joseph of Arimathæa, a man of wealth, a member of the Sanhedrin, and a secret disciple of Jesus, who did not consent to the cruel resolution to put him to death, asked that the body of the Saviour might be given to him. The request was granted, and he repaired to "the place of a skull" to take the holy body from the cross. Here he was joined by Nicodemus, who had brought "a mixture of myrrh and aloes." Together they took down the holy body, wrapped it in the linen clothes, sprinkled the myrrh and aloes amongst them, and conveyed the Holy One to the new tomb, wherein no man had ever yet been laid. (Luke 23:53.) Thus he, who once "wandered in poverty's stamp," "made his grave with the rich man in his death," and received the anointing of the great ones of the earth. But though his body had been destroyed and placed in the grave, the Pharisees and chief priests could not forget the mysterious saying of his *that in three days he would raise it up*. These words came to them with such increasing force that they repaired to the residence of Pilate, told him what the Deceiver had said, and requested that the sepulchre might be made secure till the third

day, lest his disciples should come and steal the body, and then start the report that he had risen. (Matt. 27:63, 64.) Pilate said, "Take a watch, and make it secure as ye know how." Accordingly, with a guard of Roman soldiers they went their way, sealed the huge stone at the entrance of the sepulchre with their official seal, and then consigned the soldiers to the duty of watching the tomb of the Master.

Very early on the morning of the third day it was discovered that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb. This fact has never been denied by saint or sinner. Then, the only question upon which there is disagreement is the question relative to the resurrection. Skeptics claim that his body was stolen. Christians claim that he rose from the dead. Hence the subject:

II. RISEN OR STOLEN — WHICH? To believe that his body was stolen is to believe:

(1) *The testimony of the soldiers to an event that occurred while they were sleeping.* Suppose I place this gold watch on my desk, retire, fall asleep at once, and do not wake till morning. I then discover that during the night the watch has disappeared. At once I go to the authorities and succeed in having "John Brown" arrested on the charge of theft. A jury of twelve intelligent men is selected, and the trial is begun. He denies the charge. The testimony is called for, and of course I must give my testimony first. My attor-

ney asks me to tell the jury all I know about the case. I testify that I placed the watch on my desk and retired. At once I fell asleep, and did not wake till morning. I then discovered that "John Brown" had stolen the watch. I am then asked, "At what hour of the night did he steal it?" My answer is, "I do not know; I was asleep!" "Did he steal the watch while you were asleep?" "Yes, sir!" This is the end of my testimony. Do you suppose that the jury of twelve intelligent men would find "John Brown" guilty on such absurd testimony? Most assuredly not! Why? Because I could not give testimony to an event that occurred while I was asleep. Ask those Roman soldiers, "At what hour of the night did the Master's disciples come to steal the body?" They answer, "We do not know; we were asleep!" "Which one of his disciples entered the tomb first?" "We do not know; we were asleep!" "Was the body in the tomb when you fell asleep?" "Yes!" "Was it there when you awoke?" "No, sir!" "Then the body left the grave while you were asleep?" "Yes, sir!" "Then how do you *know* the disciples stole it?" They are as silent as stone men! The fact in the case is that they were given a "large sum of money" to manufacture a lie!

Then again: "Either," says St. Augustine, "they were asleep or awake; if they were awake, why should they suffer the body to be taken away?"

If asleep, how could they know the disciples took it away? How dare they, then, depose that it was stolen? ”

(2) *To believe that his disciples stole the body is to believe that both they and the soldiers openly defied the Roman law and penalties.* The governor’s seal was placed on the tomb. If any one broke that seal, death was the penalty. The body could not be stolen without breaking the seal. Is it reasonable to suppose that those frail and timorous disciples, who fled as soon as he was taken into custody, dared to break that seal? Did not they have everything to lose and nothing to gain by such an act? Could they afford to defy the Roman authority? Then, again: those soldiers were placed on duty to see that that seal was not broken. If they *allowed* the seal to be broken, death was the penalty. Under such circumstances and dangers as these, do you think it reasonable to suppose that they would have suffered the disciples to break the seal? Then, it was a death penalty to *steal* a human body. For *allowing* a human body to be stolen, death was the penalty. To sleep on duty was a death penalty. Now then, in the light of common sense and reason, is it reasonable to suppose that both the disciples and soldiers hazarded their lives by disobeying the Roman law? No, a thousand times no!

(3) *Then, to believe that the disciples stole the body is to believe that which was impossible.* If that body was not raised from the dead, it must

have been stolen. But this theft is incredible! Who committed it? Did the enemies of the Master do it? Would they have added to his glory by countenancing a report of his resurrection? If they stole the body, why did they not produce it and thus silence the report of the resurrection? They did not have it. Hence, they could not produce it. Did his disciples steal the body? It is next to certain that they *would* not and it is absolutely certain that they *could* not. Then, if Jesus were not risen, he deceived his disciples with vain hopes of his resurrection. How came the disciples not to discover the imposture? Would they have hazarded their lives by undertaking such an enterprise in favor of one who was a deceiving impostor? At the time the body of Jesus left the grave there were approximately three million Jews in Jerusalem attending the feasts. The streets of that city were teeming with the passing multitudes, and it would have been impossible for his disciples to have stolen the body and carried it away without being detected!

Now, then, in support of the proposition that he rose from the dead it will suffice to consider:

(1) *The testimony of the disciples.* His first appearance was to the women as they journeyed from the sepulchre. In the conversation which he held with them he told them to tell his disciples that he would meet them in Galilee. His next appearance was to Mary Magdalene. His third appearance was to Peter. Then at different times

and places he appeared to divers persons. He appeared to two of his disciples as they were on their way to Emmaus; to ten of the apostles; to all of the apostles, Thomas being present; to seven of the apostles at the Lake; to more than five hundred of the disciples at one time; to James the less, and last of all, he appeared to Paul as one born out of due time. The credibility of these witnesses is beyond question! The things which they vow are not empty suppositions, distant events related by others, but *real facts* which they saw with their own eyes. "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have beheld, and our hands handled." (1 John 1:1.)

(2) *The testimony of the angel of the Lord.* "Behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment as white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said." (Matt. 28:2-6.) Did that messenger from heaven, clad in glistening apparel, bring a false message to the hearts of those women? Was he a messenger of despair instead of hope? Let not the world think so! His was a message of hope and good cheer! That angel of the morning

carried the news of the dawning of earth's greatest day!

“ Soft the glow of morning sunlight
On the lone Judean hill,
Till an angel flashing through it,
Gave it greater glory still.

“ Oh, the beauty of that morning!
Ne'er was morning half so fair,
As the greeting of an angel
Floated out upon the air.

“ Banished now the woe and anguish,
For the light of heaven shone
All about our risen Saviour,
And his tomb became a throne.”

III. WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION PROVE FOR CHRIST?

(1) *It proves him to be divine.* Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. This he confessed before the chief priest. He claimed to have power to lay down his own life and power to take it up again. This power was within himself. Elijah raised the dead, but could do so only by a power without — the power which he received from God. Peter restored the dead to life, but he did it by the power of Christ. Christ raised the dead by his own power. He raised himself from the dead by the power within himself. “Destroy this temple, and the third day *I* will build it up again.” “I am the resurrection and the life.” His resurrection vindicates the justness of his claim!

(2) *His resurrection proves that he had power over death.* Death walked out and challenged the Son of God to battle. He accepted the challenge and won! "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

"The Lord is risen indeed!
Then, death is not an endless sleep;
Grim warders shall not always keep
My flesh with ruthless greed,
Since the dear Christ arose
Conqueror of those last foes
Which my true life oppose.
Lie where I may, low winds shall wave
Sweet Easter flowers above my grave."

In the fourth and last place let us ask:

IV. OF WHAT MOMENT IS THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST TO US?

(1) *It furnishes a basis for our hope of life beyond the grave.* The human heart longs for higher and better things than this life can ever afford. It leaps out into the future and grasps the hope of another and better life! It longs for immortality! Man calls his highest imagination into requisition to find it! He looks up into the very gate of heaven and asks, "Will man live again?"

Is there life beyond? Will the longing desires of my nature be satisfied? Will I live forever?" These are the questions of the soul. These are the questions that call forth the answer: "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall *never die*." The poet heard the answer, and in words of deepest tenderness breathes to us the message that "the infidel's 'no hope' is the dawning of the hope of every Christian man." It is the dawning of the hope that

"There's a home in the skies where the weary will
rest,
A glorious home in the land of the blest;
There tears will be wiped from the sorrowful eye,
And the broken heart will forget to sigh.

"No pestilence rides on the wings of the air,
No wave of affliction or sorrow is there;
In darkness that region shall never be furled,
For the smile of the Lord is the light of that world."

(2) *Not only does the resurrection of our Lord furnish a basis for the hope we have of life beyond the grave; it is the divine guarantee that there is life beyond the grave.* You see those spring flowers blooming yonder by the wayside? Do you not to-day hear a million buds bursting into life? Do you not see returning life on every side? Is not nature waking out of her long silent slumber? If these companions of spring die and live again, shall we not expect as much of our bodies? Are

our bodies of less value than they? Indeed, I accept this returning life which we see all around us as a proof of the resurrection of our bodies. But the resurrection of our Lord is the *divine guarantee*, and by it, "by the universal hope and expectation, by the fragmentary character of this life, by the longings of our nature that this world cannot satisfy, by the intuitions of justice, by the soul-attractions which beckon us onward and upward," you can hold your own against the unbeliever!

"Oh, thou that reverest a Master above,
And sighest for glories immortal and high,
Be strong in believing, and steadfast in love,
When passion is loud and the tempter is nigh!
When infidels bid thee be false to thy Lord,
When they laugh at the faith that ennobles and
saves,
When they scoff at his people, and rail at his word,
Be thou to their wildness that rock in the storm.

"Aye! stand like that sea-cliff; nor ask thou to shun
The word of obedience, the care of the cost.
There are treasures of infinite price to be won,
There are treasures of infinite price to be lost;
With the wiles of the tempter, his vengeance or mirth,
Strive thou as the bold and faithful have striven.
And the sorrows and toils of thy warfare on earth
Shall be paid in the peace and the rapture of
heaven!"

VIII

THE AWAKENING OF A SOUL

“So the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the people, Come, see a man who told me all things that I ever did.” (John 4:28, 29).

The outbreak of a feeling of opposition to the popular enthusiasm for Christ brought about the opportunity for him to have a conversation with the woman who uttered the words of the text. That there was great enthusiasm for him is very clearly set forth in the Gospel of Mark. “And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them: and he spoke the word unto them. And they came, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne by four. And when they could not come nigh unto him *for the crowd*, they uncovered the roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of palsy lay. And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven.” (Mark 2:2-5.) Already had John been thrown into prison, and Jesus was now left alone to bear the full stream of Pharisaic hatred. This hatred was all the greater because the multitude was crowding about him, and be-

cause he was making and baptizing more disciples than John. Jesus was fully aware that the results of his ministry had roused the jealousy and hatred of the Pharisees. Accordingly, he left Judea, and prepared to return through Samaria to the hills of Galilee. "So he cometh to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph: and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour." (John 4:5, 6.)

His disciples having gone to the city to buy meat, he sat there alone. And a woman of Samaria approached with a pitcher on her head, and the Saviour requested of her water to quench his thirst. Astonished that such a request should be made to her by a Jew, she inquired how he could thus address a Samaritan, with whom it was not lawful to have any dealings. On hearing this he begins to *awaken her soul* by telling her of *living water* at his command springing up unto everlasting life. His awakening power was further increased by revealing his acquaintance with the secret of her life, for she was living in adultery. This proof of superhuman knowledge made her feel that she was in the presence of no ordinary being. Upon this she remarked that her fathers worshipped on Mount Gerizim, and that the Jews claimed that at Jerusalem was the place where men ought to worship. This brought the Saviour's opportunity, and he assured her that the

hour was at hand when neither on Gerizim nor yet at Jerusalem would men worship the Father; the Samaritans worshipped they knew not what; the Jews worshipped that which they knew, for of them was salvation; but a time was coming when the true worshippers would worship the Father in spirit and in truth! Thus the woman was led to hear from his own lips that he was the long-expected Messiah.

Regarding the matter of his passing through Samaria, knowing at the same time that the Jew and Samaritan were not friendly toward each other, it may be remarked that it was not absolutely necessary! He could have gone through Peraea, and this the strict Jew would have done. However, it does not seem that Jesus chose this way wholly because it was a more direct route. He had another reason far more fundamental. He "must needs" go through Samaria because he felt the divine necessity of saving thirsty souls. Although the Saviour was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he never refused to save any individual that was willing to be saved. *It was his passion for souls that led him through Samaria!* He journeyed that way that he might awaken souls, the first of which was:

I. THE SOUL OF A SAMARITAN WOMAN. This woman had come to Jacob's well to draw water. Her life had not been a good one, and like all sinners she, no doubt, found the bondage to be bitter. Yet, with all her sin she turned her thoughts

higher. The Saviour knew her heart, and his very presence was instrumental in awakening her soul. Through the water that satisfied her temporal thirst he led her to know something of the living water — to think of the higher spiritual reality! Thus she was led step by step to say, “Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.” (John 4:15.) Indeed, she was led by personal revelation to see her sin and to feel the need of a Saviour. She felt that she was in the presence of just such a Saviour as she needed, and that he knew her altogether. She did not try to deny the sinful course of her life. She knew she was guilty and did not deny it. She showed that she was conscious of need, and that she believed that he could supply it, by asking him for information concerning the higher spiritual life of which he spoke. This he was only too glad to impart! Her highest hopes were fulfilled, and she now stood in the presence of the Messiah! Her soul was awakened, and her heart leaped for joy!

Then, like all who have really come to the Saviour, she goes forth to make him known. So anxious was she to make him known that she left her waterpot, and hurried to the town, bearing the news of the new and living water of which Jesus had spoken. Perhaps she did not make known all that the Saviour had said unto her. Yet, it is certain that she made known the important things, among which was the fact that the Saviour had

power to read her heart and life. No doubt this was an unpleasant task. It was unpleasant because she would naturally want her acquaintances to forget her unlovely life. She would not want to have them recall the things which she had done. But she felt that this would show the Saviour's power, and she exclaimed, "*Come, see a man who told me all things that I ever did!*" (John 4:39.)

The next most interesting feature of the story of "the awakening of a soul" is:

II. THAT WHICH THE SAVIOUR TAUGHT REGARDING THE PLACES OF WORSHIP. The tendency of men to localize worship is set aside by the true knowledge of the spirituality and omnipresence of the Most High God. The fact that God manifested himself in a special way to the children of Israel is due to the fact that Israel alone was then consecrated to his service, and that he wished to adapt himself to the needs of the childhood of the race. But when it comes to the reign of the Saviour, every barrier is broken down, and men are gathered into the kingdom from every nation. So everywhere the faithful are gathered together, and acceptable worship ascends to the very throne of God. "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a *spiritual* house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:5.) Here we learn that men cannot localize worship, and that the individual can worship God the Father *anywhere!*

This idea is also in perfect accord with the teaching of the Saviour. He said to this woman, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The Saviour teaches that the good hour is at hand when it is not necessary for men to go to the temple or any other special place to worship, but that everyone could worship the Father anywhere if only they will approach him in the spirit of truth.

(1) *Then it may be remarked that the place of worship, wherever it may be, is consecrated.* It is true that the mere material that enters into the edifice dedicated to the worship of God is no more sacred than any other material. Yet from the fact that true worshippers assemble there for prayer and praise, the edifice acquires a sacredness that they feel obliged to recognize. It is here that the worshipper meets and worships the object of his devotion; where the feast of spiritual food is spread, and where sinners turn from the service of Satan to the service of God. There they worship and say, "It was good for us to be there." The thoughts of all the joy of worship rush in upon *our awakened souls*, and fill them with gratitude and thankfulness. We respond to

the wooings of the Infinite Being, and with outstretched arms we plead:

“ Take me, O my Father, take me!
 Take me, save me, through thy Son;
 That which thou wouldst have me, make me,
 Let thy will in me be done.
 Long from thee my footsteps straying,
 Thorny proved the way I trod;
 Weary come I now, and praying —
 Take me to thy love, my God.”

(2) *The place of worship is a place of sacred communion with God the Father.* It is at the place of worship that God meets men and manifests himself to them. And it makes no difference where this place of worship is — God meets men there. If it is in the caves of the earth, God is there; if it is beneath the open sky or in the rude huts of India, God is there, and the worshipper enjoys holy communion with him. Through this communion with God, the soul is enriched, lifted higher and feels the pulse of the Infinite. Like Moses and Aaron, we come from the communion with God laden with precious gifts, and haste to scatter good around.

(3) *The place of worship commands our reverence.* We know that a reverence is due the holy place, recognize the presence of God, and contend that the things of the world ought not find entrance. When we enter the place of worship

dedicated to the worship of God, we should feel that the charge given to Moses has its meaning for us: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Every irreverence with which so many thoughtless people enter the house of God should be strongly condemned! The true worshipper should do this! Let us, while drawing near to God in the church, desire to be drawn yet closer towards him in faith and love.

III. WE ARE NOW BROUGHT TO THE MATTER OF WORSHIPPING IN "SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH." Here we find the *object* of our worship, and *how* to worship it. We see how the Master led her to the very loftiest themes — God and worship! No higher revelation had ever been made, and no loftier themes discussed. This marvelous revelation was made known by a weary traveller, by one despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. The revelation was so plain that the poor sinful woman partly caught and assimilated it. Indeed, this is a striking example of how the truths about God and spirituality are hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes! "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, and didst reveal them unto babes." (Matt. 11:25.)

(1) *The Father is the object of true worship.* The true worshipper shall worship *the Father*. This would seem to set aside all other modes and

forms of worship. God is the Father to men — not a Father ruling sternly from a throne, but ruling in love. This great thought, wisely revealed to Israel, our Lord made fully known; thus the ideas of men regarding God were enlarged and elevated. They were taught that *God is a Spirit*, and that *spirits* have not flesh and bones as we have. In this word the eternal essence of the Deity is described. His being is limitless! He is not limited by time and space as humans are. He never knew beginning and, therefore, will never know end. The divine *Spirit* exists yesterday, to-day, and forever. He has no limitations on the side of nature, for he is the creator of nature which “lies plastic in his hand.” He *knows* and *wills* without conditions. In his dealings and workings “none can stay his hand from working, or say unto him, What doest thou?” In him and in him alone is there absolute freedom. Thus with this conception of him, men draw from idolatry, and worship the *Spirit* instead of gods of wood and stone. They worship the *unknown God* of whom Paul spoke to the men of Athens. “Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with

hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your poets have said, For we are also his offspring." (Acts 17:22-27.) This UNKNOWN GOD is the only object of our worship — we would worship no other!

IV. WE WILL CONSIDER, IN THE LAST PLACE, THE TRUE MANNER OF WORSHIP. It is to be in *spirit* and in *truth*. It is an established fact that a man's worship is no higher and holier than the god he worships. If men worship wealth, honor, and the things which belong exclusively to this world, their worship is no higher than the world. Their form of worship will shape itself according to their idea of the Being they worship. Cold and formal ideas regarding God lead to cold and formal worship. On the other hand, warm, affectionate and loving ideas regarding God lead to humble, sacred and loving worship. Any other kind of worship is, to say the least, sacrilegious; and should forever receive the stamp of disapproval! But men cannot worship in the highest sense, neither can they get the fullest blessing, un-

less they worship God as revealed in Jesus Christ. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9.) Therefore, those who come unto him must come as children come to the Father. Their hearts are in tune with the Infinite, and their spirits enter into a joyful fellowship. Thus we are to praise and adore him *in spirit* and *in truth*. Not through any temporal incentive, nor by outward material means, but by the rising of the soul toward God in holy communion. Worshipping "*in spirit and in truth*" does not mean that we are to worship him in the spirit of servile fear. Rather we worship him in the spirit of which Paul speaks in the Hebrew letter (I believe he wrote Hebrews). "Through him let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name." (Heb. 13:15.) And not only are the worshippers to worship in spirit and in truth — they are to worship in *holiness* and in *truth*. Indeed, the nearer we get to God, the purer and more spiritual will be our worship. The more we know of God, the fuller will be our worship in truth. This statement is made upon the basis of the fact that our worship and life in general are very closely associated. It is impossible to distinguish between our secular and spiritual sphere. They mingle and unite in such a way that we cannot separate them. No man leads a sinful and wicked life and still worships God in spirit and in truth. It is impossible! Such acts of worship God calls vain. "Hear the

word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of the beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts? *Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me, new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,— I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I weary of hearing them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now let us reason together, saith Jehovah, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”* (Isa. 1:10-18.) It is true that this is symbolic language. Yet there are sacrifices still! But they are our own bodies. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.” (Rom. 12:1.) Then

again there are lustrations and separations. This is clearly shown in James. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." (James 4:8.) "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." (2 Cor. 6:17.) Serving him thus, our souls will be awakened, and eventually we shall worship him in his holy temple. "Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them."

IX

THE SPIRIT OF OUR MASTER

“If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom. 8:9).

Here we learn a tremendous fact — that if we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his. Therefore, knowing or not knowing what his spirit is, involves us in great responsibility. The Father would not hold us to so fearful consequences if it were impossible to know what the spirit of the Master is. If we *could not* know what his spirit is, it would be possible for us to be *his* without knowing it, but if we *can know* what his spirit is, and do not possess it, we are “none of his.” Hence we are to examine his plain, simple life in order to discover what his real spirit is.

I. THE VERY FIRST THING THAT I NOTICE IS THAT HUMILITY WAS ONE OF THE CHIEF MANIFESTATIONS OF THE MASTER’S SPIRIT. Every event in his life indicated this spirit. Not an expression of haughtiness and undue pride is seen in his wonderful career. Instead of ascending to a throne, he was content to go to and fro before his people, associating with sinner and offcast, humbly administering to the need of the distressed, binding up the wounded heart, and teaching profound les-

sons of humility. "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself. Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." (John 13:3-5.) This gathering of the Master and his disciples furnished an opportunity for him to inculcate one of the greatest lessons. It was one of the chief lessons of his entire life! He took upon himself the form of a servant. No incident in his life shows this more clearly than this one. He teaches the lesson of humility which should animate his followers through all ages and in all countries. This spirit of humility was taught to be the spirit of true greatness. Pride and pomp sink into nothingness at its side. The really great man is the humble man! True greatness is found in humble service. Whosoever would become great must become servant of all. The Master showed this in the event of washing his disciples' feet. So we must say that the Christian life is a life of humble service rendered to our fellow-beings.

Then, in view of what the Master taught regarding humility and service, we would say that this is an age which stands in bold contrast with his standard of service. It is an age when men need to learn the lesson of humility and of dependence upon God.

There is also what may be called *false* humility. That is, there are times when men feel that they are unworthy, and cry out, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" or, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Yet the true disciple will humbly and thankfully receive the blessing bestowed. But, when all is said, there is a false humility "that would obtrude its own ideas as to the fitness of things, and, misled by it, men would seek cleansing in their own way." They will not submit to the Saviour's way. They forget that without him they can do nothing, neither would they be anything in the earth.

Then, again, the Master not only taught humility by act, but he taught it by word as well. There was a time when his disciples thought that he was going to establish an earthly throne and rule the kingdom on earth, and they were especially anxious to know who was going to be the greatest in the new kingdom. They had an idea that true greatness was found in high places of importance. Hence they came to the Master and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:1-3.) Without humility no man can enter into the kingdom of heaven. And in order to receive the blessings of almighty God

we must become as humble, trustful, dependent and as teachable as little children. This will keep us from thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think!

II. FORGIVENESS WAS ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE SAVIOUR. In the prayer he taught his disciples, they were told to pray for forgiveness as they had forgiven those who had trespassed against them. Somebody has said that he who will never forgive others ought never to sin, for he destroys the bridge over which he himself must pass. One of the most important questions that the apostle Peter ever asked the Master was, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus said, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." And to make this meaning still plainer, he added: "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he began to reckon, one was brought unto him that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the Lord of the servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But the servant went out, and found one of his fellow-

servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and said to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all thy debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou also have mercy on thy fellow-servant? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

This parable seemed to conflict with everything that had been taught by others regarding forgiveness. The rabbis are said to have taught men that they should forgive their neighbors three times, but no more! And even this was so qualified that forgiveness was almost meaningless. Doubtless, therefore, Peter in the question he propounded thought that he was very near the real spirit of the Master. But the Saviour's reply showed him instantly that he was far off. It showed him that no limit can be set. And he it was who said: "But if ye forgive not men their

trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."

Then, the Saviour *lived* a life of forgiveness! He was always severe on sin, but dealt tenderly with the sinner. He had power to forgive sin. When the guilty accusers of a sinful woman had all passed out, the merciful Master said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

In Luke 7:37-50 we have an account of the anointing of the Saviour's feet by a woman who was a sinner, and whose sins were fully forgiven. This scene so exquisitely described by Luke has inspired both painters and poets the world over. Here is a picture of a degraded woman and a gracious and forgiving Saviour!

"She sat and wept beside his feet. The weight
Of sin oppressed her heart; for all the blame
And the poor malice of the worldly shame
To her were past, extinct, and out of date:
Only the sin remained — the leprous state.
She should be melted by the heart of love,
By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove
And purge the silver or adulterate.
She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
Still wiped the feet she was so blest to touch;
And he wiped off the soiling of despair
From her sweet soul, because she loved so much."

III. OBEDIENCE WAS ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF THE MASTER'S SPIRIT. Each year Jesus went with his parents to Jerusalem to attend the feast

of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they attended the feast, and as they "were returning, the boy tarried in Jerusalem." As soon as his parents discovered that he was not in the company, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. But they found him not. Still another day was spent in searching for him in the city, but with the same result. At length, on the third day, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the learned masters of Israel, not only listening to their words, but asking them questions. While they marveled at his understanding, his parents drew near, and were amazed to find their son among the men of so august an assemblage. When his mother had spoken to him concerning the anxiety his absence had caused, he replied in artless but mysterious words: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Then, when you recall the event of his baptism, you can not fail to see that he was obedient to the will of his heavenly Father. Leaving the home of his childhood in retired Nazareth, Jesus advanced southward towards the Jordan valley. Either at the northern ford of Succoth or the more southern one east of Jericho, he found his great Forerunner, and desired to be baptized by him. The Baptist, who had hitherto rebuked without distinction the sins of all classes and all grades, was deeply moved by the request. With an instinctive conviction of the immaculate purity of him whose advent he had

announced, he sought to prevent him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou unto me?" (Matt. 3:14.) But the Master overruled his objection. "*Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*" (Matt. 3:15.)

In the garden we see the strongest manifestation of this spirit of obedience. The night was far advanced, and Jesus, having instituted the Lord's Supper, started with his apostles towards the garden. On reaching it, the holy One left the greater number of the apostles at the outskirts, while with the chosen witnesses, Peter, James and John, he advanced farther into the shadow of the overhanging olives. Here he began to be *sore amazed* and *very heavy*, and his soul *exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*, and as a last request he asked them to watch while he proceeded about a *stone's-throw* farther and engaged in solitary prayer. The hour for the last and most terrible assault of the prince of darkness had come! Kneeling down and falling forward on the earth, he twice prayed that, *if it were possible*, the cup of suffering might pass from him, and as often with infinite resignation added, "*Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (Matt. 26:39.)

IV. IN THE FOURTH PLACE, WE NOTICE THAT FRIENDSHIP WAS AN IMPORTANT MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE SAVIOUR. To a circle consisting of but few of his followers Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down

his life for his friends." (John 15:13.) These words, as already intimated, were addressed to a company of men selected not only from those among whom and for whom the Master lived, but from the whole human race to which he was sent with the message of life. On these few men he set his fondest hopes. To them he must have felt an inward and sacred relation. He was bound to them with the strongest cords of divine friendship. This friendship was indeed one of the greatest boons that he could have bestowed upon them. It was a union of the finest feelings, a binding of hearts between their souls. It was an indefinable trust they reposed in one another! On the part of the Master as well as on the part of the apostles, this friendship was so true and strong that, rather than forfeit it, either would lay down life for the other! What was the cause of this degree of friendship? How came their hearts to be knit in such close union? There can be but one answer! It was sympathy! The tree that bears sympathy bears also friendship. Indeed, "sympathy conceives friendship."

V. AGAIN, LOVE WAS THE CHIEF MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE SAVIOUR. Love was his main power! Though he was a being of humility, sympathy, tenderness, forgiveness and purity, yet love was the greatest force in his life. His very soul was ever enveloped in the atmosphere of love. Love is the magnet in his life that is drawing the world unto him, and has led hundreds

to lay down their lives for his cause through many centuries and on every shore.

How very dearly he loved his friends! How he cared for and instructed them! He led them like a gentle shepherd. He protected his followers from the wolves, quieted them amid the raging storm, supplied their needs, and breathed upon them daily his heavenly benediction. Were there nothing else in sacred story showing his matchless love for his friends, his associations in the Bethany home would suffice. His kind association in that home, and his weeping at the grave of Lazarus, are enough to cause the world to exclaim, "Behold, how he loved them!"

X

THE SOUL'S PHYSICIAN

"And it came to pass, as he sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Teacher with publicans and sinners? But when he heard it, he said, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." (Matt. 9:10-12).

"And after these things he went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house: and there was a great multitude of publicans and others that were sitting at meat with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:27-32).

Overpowered by their wonder at the cure Jesus wrought upon the paralytic, the Pharisees and scribes did not give further vent to their indignation at his claim to exercise the lawful power of forgiving sins. But their national prejudices were soon to receive a still greater shock. As he walked by the side of the Lake of Gennesaret, the Saviour beheld *sitting at the place of toll*, probably at the port of Capernaum, a tax-gatherer named Levi or

Matthew. Though he belonged to a class above all others hated and despised by Jews of all others, the Lord did not hesitate to invite him to become one of his immediate followers. At once Matthew followed the Saviour, and in honor of his Master made a *great feast* to which he invited many of his friends and old associates.

When the scribes and Pharisees saw him thus openly associating with a degraded caste, they could not retain themselves, and openly protested. But Jesus, as usual, was awake to the emergency, and they were speedily silenced by his wise reply. The fact that those among whom he sat were sinners is the strongest argument in favor of his presence, for, as *the physician of souls*, he had specially *come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance*. Or in other words, Jesus informed them that he associated with sinners, because he was a soul-physician, and that the soul-sick needed healing. "*I came not,*" he said, "*to call the righteous but sinners*"!

The fact that Jesus virtually called himself a soul-physician implies that there is sin in the world. Therefore,

I. WE CONSIDER, IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE DISEASE CALLED SIN. It may be said in passing that sin is universal. It is almost as old as time itself, and is found wherever the human race exists. It troubled the waters of the fountain of life near the beginning, and the current of human existence has been tainted by its foul breath from

that time until now. However, what the human family lost in Adam it regained in Christ. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22.)

From the study of the following passages of Scripture we learn that sin has its origin or source in the heart of the individual. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." (Prov. 23:7.) "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*" (Matt. 12:34.) "From within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:21.) Those passages, viewed as a whole, indicate the spontaneousness of what comes from the heart; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. We have here a new application of a former saying recorded as follows: "By their fruit ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruit ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:16-20.) We cannot fail to see that

here the sentiment is that there are but two kingdoms. If we promote one, we cannot belong to the other. And they that set themselves in wilful opposition to the kingdom of God openly proclaim to what other kingdom they belong. Through opposition to God's will and plan we reveal the *venomous malignity of our hearts!*

Bad environment always brings the opportunity for evil doing, the solicitation or provocation to evil, so far do evil communications corrupt good manners; but the first cause of all must be found in the heart itself, in its lack of right direction, sympathy and force.

Then this disease drives away the love and desire that men may have for God's Word. Strange to say, this is not so in regard to *secular* truth. The man of science is strongly pushing his inquiries into the realm of nature. For instance, the astronomer studies the heavens, the chemist is busy in his laboratory, and out yonder among the hills is the geologist studying the formation of rocks. Each one in his own way seeks truth. And though they may be sinful to the very core, this sin does not repress their enthusiasm nor lessen their desire for the real truth in science. In other *secular branches* this same truth is self-evident! But with the truth that comes to us through God's Word it is quite different. This truth sounds in their conscience and they assume a different attitude towards it. Why do they assume this attitude? As somebody has said, it must

be because this truth does not offer itself as mere abstract truth to excite speculative interest. It comes bringing with it great demands, and claiming obedience. Hence they find it is not so easy always to obey the truth as to talk about it and to admire it as it is found in all natural things that God hath made. It tells us, not simply the way in which we should believe, but also the way in which Christians *ought to walk!* Thus men find it harder to *walk rightly* than to *believe rightly!* God's Word is imperative and men shrink from its demands. It is a rebuke to every sinful life. David, Solomon, Saul of Tarsus, and hundreds of others have received its rebuke. Every page of its sacred contents goes dead against sin, and he who loves sin does not care to read the book in which he sees his own condemnation written. Then the Word of God shows man the danger to which a life of sin exposes him. It reveals the wrath of God against unrighteousness and ungodliness of men. "The wages of sin is death"! "The ungodly shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God." Hence we can clearly see that sin extinguishes all love and desire for the truth as found in God's Word.

Not only is this true, but sin also destroys the soul's sensitiveness to the truth of the Word of God. It weakens the soul's power of moral perceptions. Just to the degree we cultivate the habit of obeying the truth and following it will our sensitiveness to its teachings be increased. The

vision of our souls shall become clearer, and we shall have larger views of it. Always obey divine truth. When it speaks to your soul, follow its indications of conduct and duty. Thus you will become more and more sensitive to it. On the other hand, if you disobey what you know to be the truth, the voice of truth will soon be quenched and you will cease to hear it. How soon does conscience sometimes lose its sensitiveness! That which at one time you looked upon as *sin* has come to be regarded as innocent — as something quite allowable in even a Christian man. Do not allow yourself to trifle with truth! It is for your ultimate good that it should come into a position of power in your very nature, that it may bless you with freedom. Do not, therefore, let some darling sin hold it back and prevent it from rising within your soul. That very sin is destroying your soul's sensitiveness. The only reason why the Word of God does not bless us more than it does is because some sin checks its force, and thus its power of usefulness to us is crippled.

Having thus considered the disease:

II. LET US NOW TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE PHYSICIAN HIMSELF. God saw that men were sick and needed a physician. Accordingly, he sent prophets, priests, and kings, and they were all rejected. He sent John the Baptist as a voice in the wilderness, urging repentance and condemning sin in high places, but his message was largely disregarded. Finally he sent his only begotten

Son, the great Physician to whom we now turn our attention.

The first thing we notice about him is that he is a physician who is thoroughly acquainted with the *patient — man!* “But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he *knew all men*, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man.” (John 2:24, 25.) This power of Jesus had already been shown in the case of Nathaniel, a record of which is made in John’s gospel. As proved on various occasions, Jesus knows and reads every human heart. He knows our hearts far better than we know them ourselves. How little we know of our own hearts; how easily they deceive us! But Jesus, our great Physician, knows every influence, every inception of our thought or action, every feeling and emotion, and he knows even those that are unperceived by ourselves. How could it be otherwise with him of whom it is said, “All things were made by him.” (John 1:3.) Thus he sees through our very souls, and knows full well their needs and how to supply them.

In view of this, let us not feel a regret, but rather let us rejoice, that Jesus does know men. We should rejoice because he is the loving, sympathizing Saviour, and is, therefore, able and willing to winnow the false from the true, the *real* from the *unreal* faith. The Christian’s only security is that the Saviour does know him. If he did not know us, he could not know the deeds of

our lives, and how to supply the needs of our souls. But he knows our capacities as well as our weaknesses, and how we can be best fitted for the service of his kingdom. Therefore, knowing that he knows all about us, and that he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and can send us help in time of need, it is our highest wisdom to yield ourselves to him submissively, saying, "Lord, thou knowest all things."

Still further proof of the proposition that Jesus knows us is recorded in his saying, "*I know mine own.*" (John 10:14.) Do not think that this is merely general care and oversight. In this he is, indeed, "one with the Father." The divine Providence follows all men, overlooking none, despising none! So the great Physician cares for the needs of the race.

Not only does Jesus know men altogether, but he is acquainted with the disease — *sin*. That is, he knows its devastating consequences. Certainly he who delivered that unique sermon on the mount must have been familiar with the source and influence of sin. In that sermon, especially, he informs us that sin has its origin in the heart — that its source is not in action, but in the thoughts and intentions. Had not the Saviour been acquainted with the origin, motive and effect of sin, it does not seem that he would have made such a sacrifice for its ultimate cure, and his sermons and teachings would not have been so full of warnings against it!

The Physician was not only acquainted with the patient and the disease, but he was acquainted with God. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Matt. 11:27.) "Jesus answered, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God; yet ye have not known him; but *I know him*: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying." (John 8:54, 55.)

He is a Physician of power! "And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This being true, go out and tell the nations what is the soul's prescription, to relieve it from the thralldom of sin. As all power was given unto Jesus, he is fully capacitated, as to ability, to be the Healer of the soul! Thus the disciples were to go according to the directions he gave them, and exclusively in his name!

III. IN THE THIRD AND LAST PLACE LET US CONSIDER THE PHYSICIAN'S REMEDY FOR SIN AS LAID DOWN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. All admit that there should be a remedy for sin, and that man's remedies are insufficient. Though mankind has done many things of which we can justly be proud, though man has struck the earth with knowledge, experience and forethought, and caused her to give

forth her treasures, though he has spread fertility over the barren landscape, and caused the "wilder-ness to blossom like a rose," though, by his magic touch, the earth, sea and sky have laid their treasures at his feet — yet the remedies of the greatest men can never blot out sin! They have never done so, they are not doing so, and they will never do so!

This is true because forgiveness of sin and salvation are exclusive in the New Testament gospel. Efforts have been made to substitute other names and agencies, and in this so-called substitution we apprehend one of the chief dangers of the present age. These builders of the man-made temple would set at naught the chief corner stone of our salvation. It seems that they would substitute moral principles and examples, science and philosophy, rationalistic criticism and socialistic theories, sophistical argument and pretending philanthropy, but all such influences and systems fail. They exalt material above the spiritual and leave sins unforgiven! They are a delusion and a snare to their followers. Soul salvation is found in only the New Testament plan!

The great statesman may claim that human government is a balm for our sorrows and all our woes, but all history demonstrates that this theory will not bring forgiveness to man. Human government may restrain the hand of the murderer, and protect our property and lives, but it will not reform the individual. It may dictate and con-

trol, but it will not cleanse and save. All forms of government have been wholly inadequate to suppress vice and save from sin. Recall the history of the dynasties and tell me if they saved Egypt. What did they accomplish? Were the monarchies of Babylonia and Persia sufficient to save men from their sins? Were the autocracies of Russia and Turkey sufficient? Have the better governments like England and America freed society from its vices? Is France holier as a republic than she was as an empire? Examine every human government on earth, and then tell me when you find one that forgives man's sins and saves him from hell.

The educator may claim a universal system of education is a real remedy for sin. He may set self-culture as the greatest attainment of man. But what will the same educator say about the Golden Age of Greece? What will he say about the intellectual culture of India? Has not this idea been tested and proved inadequate? Is it not a fact that sin in its most hideous forms existed in the midst of communities where the highest honor is paid to education? Education will not regenerate the heart, and change man's moral conduct. Did wisdom save Solomon from vice? Did culture save Byron from immorality? Did philosophy save Bacon from bribery? Did poetry save Poe from intemperance? Were the Athenians free from vice? "What though culture attained such a height in Athens that the scholars of the world flocked thither to pluck the choice flowers that

blossomed in her gardens of wisdom? What though art attained such height that the birds of Attica pecked at the grapes which Apelles painted on the canvas? What though the philosophers plumed their wings to soar aloft with the boldest intellectual spirits of the world? Yet the Athenians were corrupt at heart and sighed for a Saviour to save them from their sins."

Then again the benefactor may lay claim to philanthropy as a remedy for the sins of men. Well directed charity, no doubt, helps to make conditions better. It cheers hundreds of hearts that would be otherwise depressed and sad. But philanthropy will not cleanse and save. All praise to asylums and hospitals and every benevolent institution! They bless humanity, but they will not save the souls of men!

Our Saviour did not come as a statesman, and yet he said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." He did not come in the profession of a school-teacher, yet within himself he held hidden treasures of infinite wisdom and knowledge. He did not claim to be a philanthropist, and yet his life is condensed into a single sentence—"he went about doing good." He saw that Rome with her law had failed, he saw that culture had failed to save Athens, and saw that filial obedience and benevolence had failed to save China! Therefore, the Saviour set about to do what as yet had never been done—to reform the heart, and give men a

plan whereby they might obtain forgiveness of their sins and receive eternal life. This plan is plainly taught in the New Testament Scriptures, and men, to be saved, must conform to its teachings.

Taking up the study of this plan, or the remedy for the sins of men, as found in the New Testament, we notice that:

(1) *Faith is the first item that enters into it.* "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6.) What is this faith? It is belief, confidence and trust. If I say that I have faith in "John Brown," I mean that I believe in him, I have confidence in him, and I am willing to put my trust in him. In speaking of faith in this way, I am aware that much has been written and spoken about what constitutes faith, but a great deal of that which has been written and spoken has only served to obscure the subject. "Faith is that action of the mind by which we accept truth, or by which we accept him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life."

In view of the fact that we hear a great deal about "head faith," "heart faith," "gospel faith," "saving faith," "evangelical faith," "historical faith," "orthodox faith," we are led to ask how many faiths are men required to exercise? Let God's Word answer! "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope

of your calling; *one Lord, one faith.*" (Eph. 4:5.)

What is this one faith? It is the faith that the Bible requires, faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. If you believe in him, you accept him in all the sublime facts connected with his miraculous conception, his unique birth, his wonderful life, his terrible death, his burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation, and his mediatorial reign. By faith in Jesus Christ you accept him in all his commands to repent, to confess him before men, to be baptized, and to live a holy life. In a word, you accept him in all his offices of Prophet, Priest and King.

This faith is obtained only by accepting the testimony God has given concerning him. "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in his name." (John 20:30, 31.)

(2) *After Jesus Christ has been accepted by faith, it must be followed by repentance, deep and thorough.* In all dispensations the importance of repentance has been made evident. Whenever men have sinned they were required to repent in order to receive the divine favor. The New Testament abounds in this teaching! The burden of John's preaching was repentance. (Matt. 3:1-12.) Jesus himself condemned certain cities

because they would not repent. "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works had been done, because they repented not." (Matt. 11:20.) And then he declared that all who refused to repent would inevitably perish. "I tell you, Nay: except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 15:5.) Indeed, there is not love and power enough in the universe of God to save an unrepentant sinner!

What is repentance? It is an act in which, with sorrow for sin, we turn away from it and willingly forsake it. It is reformation. It is a thorough, radical change of character and transformation of life. It is restitution as far as it is possible to make restitution for the wrongs we have committed. Zaccheus understood the true nature of repentance when he offered to restore four-fold to those whom he had defrauded. If repentance means anything, it means that the dishonest man shall "provide things honest in the sight of all men," that the gambler shall forsake his den, that the libertine must abandon his wanton revels, that the profane shall cease to swear, that the drunkard must quit the saloon, and that the thief must quit theft. In a word, men must turn from their old sin in heart and action, and like Paul, say, "The things I once loved I now hate."

(3) *The next item that enters into the remedy for sin is confession.* You must not serve the Lord secretly or clandestinely. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot

be hid: neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:14-16.)

Christians must let the world know where they stand. There comes a time in every man's life when he must show his hand, and that time, for the sinner, is when he gives his heart to Christ. I am aware that it takes a stout heart and a heroic spirit to make the confession of one's faith in the Saviour, but salvation depends upon it, and, therefore, it must be made. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:8-10.)

This confession may cost you your old associates, and bring many persecutions upon you, but such considerations must not overbalance your love for Christ and your loyalty to him.

"Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest.
Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me,

While thy love is left to me;
Oh, 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with thee."

Neither pleasures of this world nor its scoffs and its frowns should receive a moment's consideration when duty demands that we publicly confess our Lord. Our salvation, as stated before, depends upon this confession. "Whosoever will confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father in heaven. And whosoever will deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father in heaven." (Matt. 32:33.)

(4) *Baptism is the immediate duty that follows the confession of faith, and it has its particular place in the plan of salvation.* Indeed, no one who has arrived at the years of accountability has the promise of salvation without it. Of course baptism of itself can do no possible good. It must not be disassociated from Christ nor from its antecedents. Unless preceded by a preached gospel, by a living faith, by a hearty repentance and a hearty profession of faith, and unless obeyed in the spirit of loyalty to our Lord's command, it can do no possible good. Without these antecedents it can possess no more virtue than would the action of a man who accidentally falls from a log into the water.

But the question arises, is baptism absolutely necessary? One of the best ways to answer this question is by asking other questions. Do you

think it is necessary to obey God's commands? You answer, "Yes." Then, is baptism a command? Your answer is, "Yes." According to your own admission, it is absolutely necessary!

One of our ministers gave his hearers the privilege to ask any questions they desired. A gentleman arose and said, "Do you believe baptism is necessary?" The minister answered, "Jesus said, 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.'" "But," said the gentleman, "do *you* think it is necessary?" Again the minister said, "Jesus said that many of the scribes and Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves by refusing to be baptized of John in Jordan." "But what do *you think*?" said the man. Again came the answer, "Jesus said, 'Go teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'" "You are trifling with me," said the man. "I want to know what *you think*." To this the minister replied, "Jesus said, 'Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.'" The gentleman is not satisfied and says, "But let me have *your* opinion in regard to the matter." Again came the scriptural reply, "Peter said, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for the remission of sins*, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" "This ended all questions! There was no room

for his “*think-so’s*” and “*opinions.*” The Lord had spoken, and all that was necessary on the part of the minister was a “*thus saith the Lord.*”

I have presented four steps to be taken by the sinner in order to become a Christian, and secure salvation from past sins. These four steps, taken as a unit, constitute the great Physician’s remedy for sin. This is the only remedy found in the New Testament. This remedy will enable you to stand in God’s presence “washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor. 6:11.)

Permit me now to call your attention to one other element that must accompany all others. This element is prayer or calling upon the name of the Lord. It is this spirit of prayer that renders all acts of obedience acceptable to God. Therefore,

“ Be not afraid to pray, to pray is right:
Pray, if thou canst, with hope, but ever pray,
Tho’ hope be weak or sick with long delay.
Pray in the darkness if there be no light.
Whate’er is good to wish ask that of heaven,
Tho’ it be what thou canst not hope to see.
Pray to be perfect, tho’ martial leaven
Forbid the spirit so on earth to be;
But if for any wish thou darest not pray,
Then pray to God to take that wish away.”

XI

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF OUR SAVIOUR

“And he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; That in all things he might have pre-eminence.” (Col. 1:17-19).

By all Christian people Jesus Christ is recognized as the pre-eminent figure in all art, poetry, and literature. Not only is this true of our own time — it has been so throughout the whole Christian system. Hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament point with unerring finger toward him. Philip spoke of finding him of whom “Moses in the law did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Take him out and all these prophecies are meaningless, and every Christian influence over men would cease.

Paul, Peter, John, Knox, Luther, Campbell, McGarvey and a thousand other great souls have believed unflinchingly in his pre-eminence. Paul said, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” This statement makes us feel more keenly than before that Jesus, our Saviour, is indeed pre-eminent. Therefore, we are curious to know upon what his pre-eminence rests. Why is he pre-eminent?

I. HE IS PRE-EMINENT BY VIRTUE OF THE FACT THAT HE IS THE FIRST-BORN OF EVERY CREATURE. When God said, "Let us make man," he made one of the most stupendous statements ever uttered! This statement means that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead, Jesus Christ being one of them. Concerning his pre-existence Christ said, "Before Abraham was, I am."

And then the apostle John said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that had been made. In him was life." From this passage we learn that the existence of the Saviour antedates all time and created things. Yea, more than this! It denotes the beginning of that movement of the divine creative energy from which there came forth the visible universe. These words of the inspired writer lead us beyond any definite point into the immeasurable eternity. In the beginning the Word existed. The Logos was not called into being; he existed before all worlds — before the visible universe began. As eternity has neither beginning nor end, the Word is eternally existent. "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him." (Col. 1:16.)

II. HE IS PRE-EMINENT BECAUSE HE IS THE

IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD. Man was created in the image of God intellectually, morally, and in volition. *Jesus* is the image of the *invisible* God, the Son of his love joined by a bond to us mysterious and ineffable, and related in a sense in which no other can be. He is the first and the last — the only divine Son.

It may be remarked that this invisibility is what may be called a negative attribute of God, and along with which may be mentioned unsearchableness, unchangeableness, and irresistibleness. These attributes are wholly necessary in order that we may have a better understanding of the everlasting Father. In pathetic words Job said, "I cannot in any way penetrate the dark mantle of his invisibility." (Job 11:7.) The same great truth is implied in the words of Jesus to the woman at Jacob's well, "God is a Spirit." Then what hath he to be seen? The fruits and traces are seen in all his works, but he himself is seen nowhere. In saying this we are, of course, remembering "God manifest in the flesh" and the elevation of the visible humanity into the heavens in the person of Jesus Christ. But if it should be that our Lord will always, through eternity, retain his glorified humanity in heaven, and be seen in that and be loved and worshipped in that, the question still is, *what* will be seen? The spiritual essence, the limitless power and presence of God, will still be deep within, quite beyond our understanding, high above and far away. What the

individual can see can never be a part of the immortal soul. The spiritual substance requires a spiritual portion, just as the child-spirits require the Father of spirits; thus spirit for spirit — Creator for creature — invisible for the visible.

III. IN THE THIRD PLACE, JESUS IS PRE-EMINENT IN THAT HE HAS POWER OVER DEATH. There was never a transition to be compared with the transition from death to life. It is the only really true victory ever won. The warrior goes out to conquer only to be conquered. They rise only to fall. They use the sword and perish by it. The decree has been launched forth that from dust we came and to dust we must return. Only the Son of God could say, "I am alive for evermore." When John penned these words he was an exile on the lone island of Patmos. He was banished there "for the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus." Yet he was far from being alone! Jesus came to him. This was a special visit of the Saviour, and John's soul was lifted far higher than ever before. He received visions and revelations. A great future passed before his eyes. No doubt he saw nations fall and rise, and men succeed and fail. The battle between good and evil was waged in his very presence; he saw the rise of the spiritual kingdom, and the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. But with all this he needed the assurance that he was really in the very presence of his own dear Master. So he is tenderly led back to Calvary: "I am he that liveth, and

was dead." John knew what this meant. He had stood near the cross. He remembered the painful hours that the disciples had experienced. He also remembered that their pain and suspense was relieved—"the tidings came that Jesus was risen." Then later the familiar voice said, "Peace be unto you." All this, and many other events did he remember only too well! But above all other things he remembered, Christ's victory over death, hell and the grave was the most vivid.

IV. JESUS IS PRE-EMINENT BY VIRTUE OF HIS SINLESS CHARACTER. From the very day that Jesus walked up and down the earth, there has come the marvelous challenge, "Who of you convicteth me of sin?" This challenge unaccepted compels men to admit that he was a sinless character. The consciousness of this truth brings man to the sense of his own frailty and imperfections. It causes him to long for the perfect, and to feel that somewhere and sometime he will attain it. When the Master was on the earth he walked among men, yet wholly unlike them. Where they lost, he won; where they sinned, he was perfect; where they were weak, he was strong; where they were faithless, he was faithful, and where they ignored the will of God, he was obedient. He met all the attacks upon his character in the same way and with the same challenge. Indeed, he was literally a sinless person. In him we have a character of immaculate purity. In all that is recorded of him there is no word of evidence of

moral fault! There is positively no ground for reproach! Had he anywhere, even in his prayers to his heavenly Father, hinted that he was guilty of fault in the least, some record of this self-accusation would have been recorded; beyond a doubt, it would have found its way into tradition concerning him. When his cause was prostrate and nothing but death awaited him, when his enemies were nailing him to the tree, when he was dying, do you not think that some expression implying penitence would have been heard? Not only is there no trace of such a feeling on his part, but it will scarcely be denied that he made on his followers the impression that he was perfectly free from moral fault.

V. OUR SAVIOUR IS PRE-EMINENT BY VIRTUE OF HIS UNSELFISH MINISTRY TO MANKIND. Who can fail to see that "he stooped to conquer"? His was a life of ceaseless service. The doctrine he preached and taught was, "Let him who would be greatest serve." This doctrine was exemplified in his own life before the world. If one should ask me for a sentence that would include his entire life I would write this sentence—"He went about doing good." There's his life in one sentence! He emptied his life for others. He was willing to serve, though it would lead eventually to the cross and to death. Oh, how weary and disgusted we are with the selfish service of the benefactors (?) of our own day! How we question the motive

with which they serve! Did men ever question the Saviour's motive? Not so! Paul cried, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich." And then he suffered the just for the unjust, and by his stripes, long and deep, we are healed. In every relation of life he served for the joy he might bring to others. Men knew him as a physician of both soul and body; they flocked after him as the good shepherd of the sheep; they love him as a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and they worship him as the living, unselfish Son of God. Men receive and cherish his own words: "I came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

VI. IN HIS TEACHING CHRIST IS PRE-EMINENT. He had never had the advantage of what we call an education, but he was truly the world's greatest teacher. Sensible men and women care less about the religious teaching of such teachers as Confucius, Zoroaster, Buddha, Mohammed, and other founders of ethnic faiths. All over the world we hear men crying out: "Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." His sermon on the mount stands unrivaled for its matchless teaching. It has stood every test for two thousand years! Some one has said in substance that the

critics have made no more impression on it than the shooting of boiled peas would make on the Rock of Gibraltar.

He is the hub of the great spiritual system. What the sun is to the solar system, Jesus is to the spiritual system. All other systems, dogmas, and speculations appear for a short time, disappear and never return. They all flee before the Son of the Most High!

“ Other systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

Truly “ never man spake like this man.” This was a remarkable tribute to the power of Christ as a teacher. Man never spake such revelations of truth. No man ever taught such sublime truths about the character of God, and about the relation between God and man, and because he thus taught, he stirred the heart and stimulated the mind of the pupil.

The purpose of his teaching was to bring the will of man into harmony with the will of God. He used his scholarship to teach others how to live. He opened no school, neither did he announce a course of study. “ He is himself the great university of mankind, and every hungry soul becomes his pupil by the very fact of its hunger.”

His teaching is not alone in the words which he

uttered; it is also the deeds which he did and the example of his own life. He was recognized by the greatest minds of his own day to be the great religious teacher whose coming was to fulfill the ideal hopes of centuries. It was not his words only that gave them this belief; it was their embodiment in his acts and their illustration in his character. He revealed religious truth that was to be not only accepted but lived. He not only told men what this divine truth was, but showed them by the life he lived!

VII. AS A SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD JESUS IS PRE-EMINENT. The angel Gabriel came from heaven and announced to Mary that she was highly favored, and that she was to give birth to a son who was to be the Saviour of the world. "And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." He was born, and the glad tidings were announced to the shepherds who were on duty at night watching their flocks. Does it not seem natural that he spoke later concerning the good Shepherd who would lay down his life for the sheep? "And lo, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid: for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Then the attention of the wise men from the

east was attracted, and they followed the star to Bethlehem, and when they saw the child and his mother they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures, they offered unto him gifts! That child was God's unspeakable gift to a perishing world — the gift of a Saviour!

“ A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arm I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Saviour and my all.”

XII

THE WAY TO GOD

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6).

These words of the text are true to the prophetic picture thrown upon the pages of prophecy more than seven hundred years before Jesus came into the world. “And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed: the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err *therein*. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon, they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isa. 35:8.)

Here is a prophetic utterance concerning *a way*. Jesus said, “I am the way.” This is one of the marvelous claims advanced by our Lord. The claim is unique, a divine claim. No one before or since has ventured to make a similar claim.

Buddha and Mohammed taught what they *believed* to be the *truth*. The Master goes far beyond this and says, "I am the way"! To those who are friendly to the cause of Christ and Christianity, this utterance seems very natural when viewed in connection with his life, so full of the heavenly message and wonderful works. One cannot conceive of the joy and gladness he has brought to millions through the work he did. Each heart has had, at some time, the personal experience of the word of this truth. He teaches that whosoever shall take him as the way will attain the true end of the way — the end of spiritual life, even God himself! Just as the stream returns to the ocean from which it was drawn, so the spiritual life returns to God who gave it. Just here it may be said, "The spirit attains to union with God, from whom its life is derived." He assures the disciples that those who had seen him had seen the Father. He is the Mediator, the junction between man and God. He is the Alpha and Omega; therefore he is absolutely the *way*!

This truth leads us to observe in the first place:

I. SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WAY.

(1) *It is a plain way.* We are told that it is so plain that "wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err *therein*." Here we find a way that is free from everything that might intersect, and along which there is an abundant supply of guide-posts. In him there can be no mistakes made. In him

we have a directory so clear that reference to it settles every question. God's Word is the exclusive guide of life. It is true you will find many difficulties in the Word of God — many things that you cannot understand. Yet there are no difficulties in the ascertainment of the way of life. The way of forgiveness and to the Father's house is written with the clearness of a sunbeam. There is no occasion for stumbling; no reason why one should mistake the way. It is a way easily known. So when the way seems dark, and perplexing problems confront you; when you are at a loss to know what to do, turn your mind and heart upon Jesus Christ, the example and rule by which your acts are to be governed. Do not ask, "What *would* Jesus do," but rather ask what *did* Jesus do. You will find in his life an example of what you ought to do in every relation of life. He was always master of the situation and never made a mistake. Thus he is a worthy pilot of the soul, and one that will lead us eventually to the Father.

" Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rocks and treach'rous shoal;
Chart and compass came from thee;
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

" As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;

Boist'rous waves obey thy will
When thou sayst to them, 'Be still!'
Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

"When at last I near the shore,
And the fearful breakers roar
'Twixt me and the peaceful rest,
Then while leaning on thy breast,
May I hear thee say to me,
'Fear not, I will pilot thee.'"

(2) *It is a way of perfect holiness.* "The unclean shall not pass over it." It is a holy way. The way is characterized by those who traverse it. They are Christian people journeying along the way of life with other Christian people. The redeemed walk therein — those who separated themselves from the contaminated world and are living lives of purity, always striving to do the will of God. It is, indeed, a step far in advance of *morality*. It looks far beyond self, and endeavors to be helpful to others.

(3) *The way is a pleasant, congenial and safe way.* There are pilgrim songs. The way is traversed by the most congenial companions. They think divine thoughts, and commune with the Infinite. The very nature of their characters makes the journey a pleasant one. Every step is a joy!

"You may talk of the friendship of youth and of age,
And select for your comrades the noble and sage,

But the friends that most cheer me on life's rugged
road

Are the friends of my Master, the children of God."

Then it is a safe way. "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee and in their hands they will bear thee up lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone." "He shall keep the feet of his saints." "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon." No harm can befall those who are on the way with the Lord. He is the Shepherd of the sheep, and we should have faith enough to know that he will care for us!

"The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a Shepherd's care;
His presence shall my wants supply,
And guard me with a watchful eye;
My noonday walks he shall attend,
And all my midnight hours defend."

Then we are told that it is a way of joy. They shall come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Whether we enjoy the journey or not depends upon the presence of the elements that go to make up the way. These elements are large purposes, high ideals, and tasks large enough to command all time, thought and affection.

II. IN THE SECOND PLACE JESUS IS THE WAY THROUGH HIS INCARNATION. As many study the incarnation of the Saviour they are prone to lay

too much stress upon the human side of his life. The fact of his becoming the helpless babe of Bethlehem and growing up like any other ordinary man makes them feel too keenly the force of the human element that entered into his character. That he was truly human is a truth that should never be lost sight of. He took upon himself the nature of a human. He became flesh just as you and I did. It was absolutely necessary that the human enter into his character. This was necessary in order that he might understand our nature more perfectly — that he might understand the human as well as the divine. It is the fact of the human element in him that enables him to say to men, “I am the way,” for they *must* begin with us; that is, the *way* must begin with human nature. Not only is it true that many make “too much” of the human side of the Master’s character; there is also a tendency to neglect, or minimize, at least, the truth of the Saviour’s divinity. But listen, the Saviour’s divinity is the corollary of his humanity. Indeed, it is through his *divine* nature that he becomes the end of the way, just as by the *human* he is its beginning. He leads from the temporal to the eternal, from sin to God, from earth to heaven — all because he is “God with us.” Indeed, his incarnation discloses the greatest manifestation of divine perfections. The angels had seen God’s power, wisdom and goodness in all creation, but in the incarnation they saw his condescension and grace. This was the event that

made even the angels of heaven sing, "Glory to God in the highest."

III. CHRIST IS THE WAY BECAUSE MAN CANNOT GET TO GOD THROUGH NATURE AND MORAL LAW ALONE. Along this line there are many who argue that Christ may be one of the ways to God, but that he is not the only way. They claim that it is possible for the individual to "rise through nature to nature's God." It is true that back of all nature there is the wisdom and power of an Almighty Creator. We look at the marvelous work of the universe, and see nothing but order and harmony in it all. The wonders of it all speak of an intelligent and infinite mind. Then there is the great work of Providence preserving all this harmony and order. Indeed, when we realize our own littleness and insignificance in view of the grandeur surrounding us on the earth, we cry out with the psalmist of old, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" Besides, there is in nature that which destroys those conceptions of benevolence which Providence seems to have established. In nature we find the mystery of pain and evil—"facts which, if viewed apart, lead to Buddha's idea of life as a curse and not a blessing." Yes, it is an established fact that there is no true way to God through nature alone. In this way we could not rise to the knowledge of the divine and loving Father. All these laws of nature tell of God's mighty power. Behind then Providence is many times hidden. Hence those who

seek to come to God in this way approach him in fear instead of faith. Then history shows that the men who try to come to God in this way are led farther from him. This is because they have come to "worship the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever." (Rom. 1:25.)

IV. JESUS IS NECESSARILY THE WAY BECAUSE MAN CANNOT GET TO GOD EVEN THROUGH THE HIGHER NATURE WITH WHICH GOD HAS ENDOWED OUR BEING. But one says, "There is within man himself a witness of the Deity." Not by nature alone can we get to God. Our moral nature, or conscience, is the evidence of the divine presence of God in man. We may say that when our conscience speaks it is God calling to duty and higher and holier living. And if we walk according to its promptings we shall get to God. We are willing to admit that this is, in a measure, true. But certainly it is not all the truth. I can see how it would be the whole truth if there were no sin in the world. Then it would be *truth* regarding man's relation to God. But the proposition that now confronts us is whether or not men always obey the divine law and listen to the voice of conscience. Do even the best of men do it? Does not the conscience sometimes become dull and benumbed? Is not its voice often disregarded? Was not this true in the case of Judas' betrayal? And was it not true in the event of Peter's denial? Hence, can we not see that the divine law only reveals our real distance from God? "By the law

is the knowledge of sin." It gives us a glimpse of the righteousness of God the Father, yet are in it the words, "The soul that sinneth shall die." It tells of the loving Father whose heart grieves when the law is broken, and who will vindicate its real worth. Thus we are led to see that men are not led by this way to the Father's love and care.

V. ALL THIS LEADS US TO JESUS ALONE AS THE WAY. Just as a way is a road connecting two points, so Jesus is a way connecting earth and heaven. He is the bond of union between man and God. He is the highway leading from earth to heaven. Men have sinned and are spiritually dead. In Adam all died, but in Jesus Christ all are made alive again. His mission was to bring life to men, and those who have received him have accomplished the end for which God sent them into the world. They conform their wills to the will of God — one with the Saviour and God. Through him they have attained to the spiritual end! Jesus is, therefore, the means by which we "attain to truth which is light and the life which is love." Thus how truly can he say, "*I am the way*"! Why is he the way? He is the way because he is the *truth* and the *life*! A way is not the correct way unless it leads to the desired end. Men long for the Father, and are searching for the WAY leading to him. Jesus leads them to the desired end! In him they realize and are saved from the sinful course of their lives. Too, by the gospel message he delivered to the world they learn

that the divine law has been vindicated, “so that in him God is seen to be the just and the justifier.” “I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:26.) Through faith and communion with Jesus they become one with the Father in him. Thus it can be clearly seen that Jesus is the way to the Father—that his claims were true. “Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands: that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of perdition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in the ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace, and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for *through him* we both have our access in one Spirit *unto the Father*. So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the house-

hold of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a body temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are one builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." (Eph. 2:11-22.)

VI. NOW LET US NOTICE HOW JESUS AS THE WAY IS TO BE RECEIVED. In this regard there can be no doubt. The Lord has not left us in any doubt whatever! "I AM THE WAY"! It is through him that the spiritual life is implanted in us, and by whom we are led to the end of the way. But we must become actually united to him! There are no "half ways!" He must be the source from which we are to draw all our spiritual strength. We must feel that without him we can do nothing. It is he to whom we must look for help in overwhelming evil. He must be the one inspiring us onward and upward. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4.) In him alone is light — the truth; and in him alone is life — power! Therefore, he is the way! In him those means of grace that would otherwise be worthless become channels through which we are assisted along the way to our heavenly home! When we are *really* and *truly* in Christ everything æsthetic helps to encourage us along the way. We see God in all things that he hath made. Truly, "the heavens declare the glory of God." The flowers, the birds, the

sunbeams, and all the beauties of nature become incentives to advancement on the way. We see the beautiful because we are in Christ, he being the very embodiment of all things that are beautiful. When men believe, they "the long journey begin." On the way there must be progress — we must move forward — the ultimate attainment requires this! Our present attainment is only an earnest and fuller joy. We can know but little of his real power and glory, wisdom and goodness, until we shall see him. "Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6.) At the beginning of the way Christ rises in our souls. "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings."

XIII

THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke 15:11-32.

The parable of the prodigal son is, perhaps, the most familiar parable recorded in the New Testament, and, strange to say, there are hundreds of people who turn coldly away from it. It may be that they have turned away from it because it is such familiar ground that it has lost its charm for them. Familiarity frequently drives away all charm that beautiful scenery, books, or other æsthetic objects may have for us. Upon this very thought Dr. Chapman gives us a word which serves as a most excellent illustration. He was sweeping through the magnificent Rocky Mountain scenery some time ago, and when the car had plunged into the Royal Gorge, and later into the Grand Cañon, it seemed to him that scenery more sublime could not be found in all the world, and if he had never been impressed before with the existence of God, he should have cried out unto him in the midst of those mountain peaks. He noticed that everyone in the car, with one single exception, was gazing with rapt admiration. This one woman was reading a book, and to his certain

knowledge she did not lift her eyes once from the printed page while they were in that wonderful scenery. When they had swung out into the great table-land, he overheard her say to a friend, "This is the thirteenth time I have crossed these mountains. The first time I could not keep the tears from rolling down my cheeks, so impressed was I, but now I know it so well that I frequently go through the whole range with scarcely a glance cast out the window." It is thus that we read God's Word, and that which fills heaven with wonder and furnishes the angels a theme for never-ending praise we read with indifference, or fail to read at all. It is thus that many read the story of the prodigal son. Others read it again and again with increasing interest, notwithstanding its familiarity.

This story of the prodigal son naturally falls into two great parts. In the first one we consider him as:

I. A WILLING AND DETERMINED SINNER. This young man was like a great many young men of our own time. He thought himself too wise to be subject to his parents. He did not want to be tied to "mother's apron strings." It was not his wish that his father should dictate for him. According to his idea, he was capable of taking care of himself. He could not but think that he was smart enough to be his own man. For him the rules of home were too rigid; the burdens of home were greater than he could bear. He could

not be free, and freedom was what he most desired. Finally he went to his father and said, “ ‘ Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me.’ And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country.” At last he had set himself free! The restrictions that had tortured him for so long were overcome; the many hard errands were finished. The monotony of the daily routine had turned into a thing of the past. The daily programmes were planned according to his notion. To himself he whispered, “ Henceforth I am my own master and the broad world is before me. Over this vast domain I will come and go as I please; there is nothing to prevent it. The world is a tremendous field in which I am free to sow; I will see life.” It was certainly a tragic thing for him to boast of “ seeing life ” when it was really death he was seeing. When you hear one talking a great deal about being “ free ” it means, as a rule, that he is enslaving himself. In the beginning he does feel a delusive sense of freedom. No longer does he have to be on duty at certain hours, obey the rules of a master, perform tasks; the world is before him, and the restrictions that he had formerly known were left behind. He is free (?). He is strong and healthy, and why not step out on the great play-board of life, like other young men, and test his power? So he starts on his journey. The old home grows dim. The

present is rich and full, but "expectation points on to new sensations and experiences"; the future beckons, and he goes. From city to city, from country to country, the free (?) traveler makes his way. He is doing as he pleases. If he wishes to stay he stays, and if he feels impelled to go he goes. He sees men on every side who are tied by duties, while he has none. He has broken the old prison in which so many people bind themselves with care and duty. He breathes the pure air, and "walks with the world at his feet." How free — how absolutely independent! He is no longer dominated by duty, morality, God; he is a grown man, and he has put away childish things. He has exchanged the old home for the world, and henceforth the world is his home. He goes to the far country; and while there, he wastes his substance with riotous living. "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into the field to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." You notice that when his money goes his friends go also, for friends that are bought with money disappear when the money disappears. Listen, friend, go without friends rather than buy them! Yea, go unloved rather than buy the lover!

This parable is acted over and over again and

again! We see it every day. But it is only when we consider the spiritual meaning of the parable that the sinful and ugly conduct of this son comes clearly into view. God is the father, man is the son. The rule of the father is a spiritual one. His voice is the voice of conscience, and the desire to escape his control is wholly unreasonable and unjustifiable. He has the right to make certain standards, and require each individual to live up to them. He has a right to punish or reward according to his will, and when one endeavors to set aside his authority and control, he is seeking to put pleasure in the place of duty, to shake off obligation to his God, to the church, and to his fellow-men. He is like the man who has had religious training in early life and due regard for the worship of God and for the house of prayer, and then, after having tasted heavenly gifts, turns away like a dog to the vomit, or the sow to wallowing in the mire.

In the second part of the story we consider him as:

II. AN HUMBLE PENITENT. No story in the Bible gives us a more perfect picture of a model penitent than the last part of the story of the prodigal son. From it we learn in what attitude of soul we should return to our heavenly Father. The manner in which the better mind was awakened in him is not necessarily an example to us. It was when hunger crept upon him that he "came to himself" and thought upon the sinful course

that had brought him to this low station in life. But, of course, this is only one of the many ways in which God makes his voice heard. It was through hunger that he spoke to the prodigal, but the way in which he calls the attention to our spiritual danger may be far different. Speaking of the various ways in which God calls to us, Sam Jones said: "Have you any idea how many calls there are in this book (the Bible) to you, my brother, and to you, my sister? O this book, with each page and sometimes with each verse, calling us to nobler and better things! And this book has been on the table at your home, and on the shelf at your home, and in your library at your home, this book to-day with its millions of copies scattered over the earth, and almost a million calls in each book! Oh, surely no man can sink down to hell at last and say, 'I would have gone to nobler heights and to a better life than I did if I had just one call of mercy and goodness from God to me.' This blessed book, how full of calls!" The providence of God brought Sam Jones around to his father's dying pillow, and he watched him as he passed out of this world. God placed his father's corpse in his pathway and he turned around and said, "I will go back; I will go back." This is the way in which God called his attention to his spiritual danger, and there are many other ways in which God leads us to wholesome change in the conduct of life. A severe illness, the sudden death of a friend, an unexpected

calamity, a kind word, a word of advice, the touch of a friendly hand, the pleading voice of a disciple — some one of these ways the attention may be directed to our awful danger and the terrible loss and risk to which we are exposed by remaining among the swine away from him. But let the experience that brings us to the Father be what it may, we can find no better pattern of penitence in word and action than the prodigal son affords us in the latter part of his history.

(1) *This young man finds fault with no one but himself.* From one end of the journey to the other he is not heard to say a word against his evil companions — against those who lured him along the broad road of sin — against those who would not give him a mouthful to eat — against those who took his money and fled; he has nothing to say about sinfulness in general; he has nothing to say about the various societies and classes, or anything to say about anybody's condition but his own. He says *he himself* is to blame; *he himself* is unworthy; *he himself* has sinned. When he came to himself he said, "What a fool I have been. Here I am — cold, homeless, friendless — without money, alone, starving; and in my father's house the servants have enough and to spare. I will go back and ask to be made a servant." Here is the crisis; here is the dividing line; here is the extremity; here his soul quivers in the balances of decision. Thus far his course was one of folly, and his return was the course of wisdom. It was

when he came to himself that he said, "I will arise and go unto my father. I will not try to excuse myself on the ground of bad companions. I have no right to mention them, though the judge may take them into account. The fact, when all is said, remains. I am responsible for my guilt, and my only recourse is to make a manly confession. I have sinned; I am unworthy."

(2) *He feels a sense of shame for his misconduct.* He abases himself before his earthly father as well as before God. This is a plain mark of penitence. "It is easy to call yourself the chief of sinners, expecting every sinner round you to decline, or return the compliment; but learn to measure the real degrees of your own relative baseness and to be ashamed, not only in heaven's sight but in man's sight, and redemption is indeed begun." Notice carefully—"I have sinned against heaven"—"against God and before thee." He feels that he is degraded before his father, and that he is fit to be only a servant. He is ashamed, and most assuredly, the element of shame is essential to true penitence.

(3) *Another mark of genuine penitence is the desire to be henceforth subject to authority.* What a wonderful change! He left the *father's* house; he is glad to return to it as a *master's* house. "Make me as one of thy hired servants." The spirit in which he comes back to the father is plainly seen in this request. He wants to serve. He seems to have wanted to recompense his father

for any pain he might have caused him. He is glad to get back under the rule from under which he was once so anxious to be free. He makes an open request: "Make me as one of thy hired servants." "Redemption must begin in subjection and in recovery of the sense of fatherhood and authority, just as all ruin and dissolution began in a loss of that sense." The lost son began by claiming his rights; he is found when he resigns them. He is lost by flying from his father when his father's authority was only paternal; he is found by returning to his father, and desiring that his authority may be absolute, as over hired servants. Thus we see by all these remarks — by humbly confessing his guilt, by feeling shame on account of it, and by sincerely desiring to be ruled and controlled by the will of the father — the father's house and the father's heart were opened to him. The father's great loving heart was touched, and he "said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

But while his father is lavishing his great love upon him, the prodigal is feeling his unworthiness. "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." He feels that *the time when he was worthy* is in the distant past. He begins to form an es-

timate of himself, and this estimate depended upon the standard with which he compared himself. He had formed a different measure of himself in his previous experience, because his standard had been different. He had a good opinion of himself. With his money he was liberal; he was generous-hearted; he had a great big heart. Nothing was too costly with which to treat his friends; money was no object with him; he flung it right and left, and he had the reputation of being the most whole-hearted fellow in the far country. He thought he was a good fellow, and measured by harlots and drunkards, he was a good fellow, and when he settled down to something like industry and measured himself with swineherds, he thought himself perhaps better than the average.

It may be that he was, but when he turned his thoughts backward and compared himself with the great loving father whose home he had rashly left, then he said, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." He had adopted a new standard, and thus a new judgment was reached. In the light of this new standard, are you worthy to be called God's son? Take this standard: God's son — are you worthy to be called God's son? How shall we apply the measurements? This way! Take Jesus Christ and lay your life alongside his and then ask yourself, "Am I worthy to be called God's son?" If you find that your life is not wholly consecrated to God's service, and that your heart is not full of unselfishness and self-forget-

ting love, you are not worthy to be called God's son.

III. IN THE THIRD PLACE LET US LOOK AT THE PRODIGAL AND HIS BROTHER. I have often wondered what the result would have been if the parable had closed while we were rejoicing in the return and reception of this younger brother. He has returned from the far country, and his father has commanded merrymaking. If this story had closed here we would have been left rejoicing in the joy of the father over his regained and penitent son. The ring of a prince is put on his finger, and the shoes of a freeman on his feet. There is great rejoicing. The father seems to say that the best is not good enough for the son who has just returned from the far country. Everything is brilliant and gay. No heart is beating with greater joy than that father's. The music increases and the dancing adds to the merriment. But behold, in the midst of it all there comes a discord occasioned by the elder brother, whose ugly conduct robs the story of its natural and happy ending. "He was angry and would not go in: and his father came out, and entreated him. But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but when this thy son came, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killest for him the fatted calf." From these

two passages of Scripture it seems that the father's service was the elder brother's delight; that at all times he had kept his father's commandments; that he was always willing to confide in his father's wisdom and care. Apparently the elder brother's character was in great contrast to that of his younger brother, for, as we have seen, the conduct of the younger brother was for a time of the most corrupt type. In him we have an open and jovial sinner depicted to the very life. But is the elder son in any way a better son? Is his conduct more commendable than the younger brother's? Does he show a more childlike spirit? Does he conduct himself more like a son than his younger brother? Do you see *even one* more admirable trait of character in him than in the younger brother? No, not one — not a whit! He is not one iota better than the younger brother. "Loving dependence, free obedience, glad and disinterested service are the distinctive marks of sonship." Not one of these do we find in him. According to his own story, he was a servant rather than a son, and his father is much more a master to him than a father! He is no better satisfied at home than his younger brother who would not submit to its restraints. His obedience was not free but servile. He has been serving for wages, and without them I do not think that he would have served. He claims to have earned far more than he has received. Obviously, then, we can see that the elder son was as far away from his father's

heart and spirit as the younger son who had been from his father's home, and had sunk into a bondage from which it was still harder to redeem him. We are to remember that in this story we have the pictures of two prodigals instead of one — two men who had wandered from God. They lost their standing as sons by losing the spirit of sons, the elder son having strayed even farther from God than the reckless prodigal who, under all his sins and sinful impulses, had a son's heart in him, and was at last drawn back by it to his father's arms. The parable teaches that those who esteem themselves saints, because they busy themselves with religious theories and fancies, may be made of far more impenetrable stuff than the transgressors whom they eye with suspicion and disdain. But it teaches another lesson even more surprising and encouraging than this — the lesson that though men may be as bad as they may, and whether they show a willing, sinful, wanton spirit, or a cautious, selfish, and mercenary spirit, or whether they are slaves to impulses or of conventionalism, God is always a good Father to them ALL. The truth is that we may each of us only too easily find both of these men in himself, and, therefore, God's grace to the one should be as welcome and pathetic as his grace to the other.

Thus we may rejoice in our hearts that our heavenly Father is exceedingly good to us all, and that when we are angry with him and, like the

elder son, will not go in, he loves us with an everlasting love and comes out and entreats us.

“ God is calling the prodigal, come without delay,
Hear, oh hear him calling, calling now for thee;
Tho’ you’ve wander’d so far from his presence, come
to-day,
Hear his loving voice calling still.

“ Patient, loving, and tenderly still the Father pleads,
Hear, oh hear him calling, calling now for thee;
Oh, return while the Spirit in mercy intercedes,
Hear his loving voice calling still.

“ Come, there’s bread in the house of thy Father, and
to spare,
Hear, oh hear him calling, calling now for thee;
Lo! the table is spread and the feast is waiting there
Hear his loving voice calling still.”

XIV

THAT PRECIOUS NAME

“And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:21).

For ages the Jews had been looking for the Messiah whom they thought would reign in David's place. They were very familiar with such prophecies as: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it will bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel”; “in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”; “the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gatherings of the people be”; “behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,” and “thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be the ruler of Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

These and many kindred prophecies had the Jews been studying from their youth, and were anxiously looking for their fulfillment. Accordingly, in God's own good way and time he fulfilled them, and the birth of him who was the fulfillment of them was on this wise: "When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus." The child was born, and "when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb."

The name "Jesus," like most Jewish proper names, is significant. Jesus means Saviour. Indeed, the name "Jesus" is fraught with deep significance and pregnant with meaning; it is above every name. "God hath highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name." As a physician, is not his name above every name? A woman who had been afflicted twelve years and "had spent all her living upon physi-

cians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment, and immediately she was made whole."

Again: "Two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us." Then the great Physician put forth his hand, "touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were healed." By word and touch he healed all manner of diseases, and thus his name as a physician is above every name.

Is not his name as a teacher above every name? Recall your gospel story, and you will learn that "about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught," and that his teaching was so marvelous that they said of him, "Never man spake like this man." "On the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught." And "they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught as one having authority," and because he thus taught, he stirred the heart and stimulated the mind of the pupil.

The purpose of his teaching was to bring the will of man into harmony with the will of God. He used his great scholarship to teach men how to live! He opened no school, neither did he announce a course of study. "He is himself the great university of mankind, and every hungry soul becomes his pupil by the very fact of its hunger."

His teaching is not in word alone. It is also

in the deeds that he did and the example of his own life. He was recognized by the greatest minds of his own day to be the great religious teacher whose coming was to fulfill the ideal hopes of centuries. It was not his words only that gave them this belief; it was their embodiment in his acts and their illustration in his character. He revealed religious truth which was to be not only accepted, but lived. In the ages past God highly exalted him and gave him a name that is above every name, and "when the obelisk of fame shall have been erected, on which the heroic characters of earth shall have their names inscribed, there on its very apex, in letters of burning light, let the name of Jesus stand, the supremest of all earth's greatness." Let us inquire into the characteristics of this name.

I. IT IS A SAVING NAME. It is precious because it is the only name wherein we must be saved. "And in none other is there salvation. For neither is there any other name in heaven that is given among men wherein we must be saved." How sublimely does the apostle in these closing words shut up these rulers of Israel to Jesus for salvation, and in what universal and emphatic terms does he hold up his Lord as the only hope of men! If men are saved, it will be in the name of Jesus. The angel announced that he should save his people from their sins, and the inspired of God said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." He "is

able to save to the uttermost all who come unto him." The Scriptures affirm that unto all who believe his name is exceedingly precious. Yes,

" There is a name I love to hear,
I love to speak its worth;
It sounds like music in mine ear,
The sweetest name on earth.

" It tells me of a Saviour's love,
Who died to set me free;
It tells me of his precious blood,
The sinner's perfect plea.

" Jesus! the name I love so well,
The name I love to hear!
No saint on earth its worth can tell,
No heart conceive how dear.

" This name shall shed its fragrance still
Along this thorny road;
Shall sweetly smooth the rugged hill
That leads me up to God."

II. HIS NAME IS A CONQUERING NAME. In the ancient " classic " world the people were drunken, licentious, and entered into many deplorable sins. Worst of all, these things were a part of their religion. One needs but a glance into the history of the ante-Christian days to see that the people were barbarous and uncivilized. When Jesus came to this earth it was wrapped in a great winding-sheet of pagan darkness, "except the little

narrow strip of Palestine, and even there God's own people had so far forsaken him that they had made his holy temple a den of thieves." Romans 3:10-18 discloses their deplorable, heart-breaking condition. "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes." Here you find a word-picture of the lowest depths of human depravity. So awful was this condition that only a God-sent Saviour could conquer and save.

Before the Anglo-Saxon race heard the name of Jesus, they were "semi-barbarous and half-civilized," but since they have heard and received it they have gone everywhere, carrying with them education, refinement, culture, good government and lofty ideals. How do you account for this wonderful change, this great transformation? If you will but look carefully into the reason of the difference between their "first state and the last," you will find that the conquering name of Jesus played a grander part in bringing about the wonderful change than all other things combined. "Righteousness exalteth the nation, but sin is a

reproach to any people." The history of all countries and peoples testifies to the truthfulness of this passage of Scripture. Egypt, Greece and Rome have gone down in their wickedness and shame, and their successors are the strong and glorious nations whose God is the Lord.

Pick out, if you please, all the free, enlightened, educated, and happy countries, and make of them one great world. Over against it place another world made up of the oppressed, uneducated, uncivilized, illiterate, and unhappy countries. What an alarming contrast! Such a contrast has never met your eye! What has made this contrast? Why is it? There can be but one answer! On one of these worlds the conquering name of Jesus is "a well of living water springing up into everlasting life," while on the other it is never heard.

Not only does his name conquer nations — it conquers and saves the individual. At one time he was in the temple, "and all the people came unto him: and he sat down and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery, in the very act." She belonged to the class of outcasts. She was a sinner, and hopelessly lost; God and society have abandoned her. There she stood in the multitude; every eye was upon her. The multitude holds itself back lest it touch her! They wanted to stone her, but "Jesus said: 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.' And again he stooped down, and wrote on the

ground." At this they went out one by one. When they had gone he said to her: "'Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?' She said, 'No man, Lord.' And Jesus said unto her, 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more'"! The poor woman had gone just as near hell as a poor creature can get on this side, but Jesus was able to stretch forth his hand and rescue her.

And did he not save Saul, the persecutor and murderer? Did he not save Zaccheus, the publican? There is no one so deep in sin that the Son of man cannot reach him; no sin so black that he cannot wash away every stain!

" Oh, what amazing words of grace
Are in the gospel found,
Suited to every sinner's case
Who hears the gospel sound."

III. HIS NAME IS A COMFORTING NAME. Jesus is acquainted with the needs of human life, and knows full well our need of a comforter. While he was on the earth he supplied this need personally, and when it became necessary for him to go away he promised to send another comforter. This promise was fulfilled, and when the Comforter came he gave us seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. How the name of Jesus comforts the dark and troubled soul! The poor widow of Nain had lost her only son. The Master's eye saw her furrowed brow; he saw the

streaming tears; he heard the tempest of sorrow sweeping across her troubled breast, and with a voice that must have trembled with compassion said to her, "Weep not." In his name she found comfort. He stands very near every troubled soul and says, "Look to me; I am the God of all comfort."

A bereaved Christian man goes to the bleak cemetery to visit the grave of his lamented wife. The trackless snow, pure and white, has drifted deep over the mound. There he kneels in the deep snow and thanks God for the companionship of so noble a woman for a short time. His heart is sad, his home is broken, and there, as his face is bathed in tears, he thanks God for the comforting name of Jesus, and promises him that he will try to be good and pure and will meet her in the heavenly land.

"O thou that dry'st the mourner's tear!
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to thee.

"But thou wilt heal the broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

"Then sorrow touched by thee grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We could not see by day."

IV. HIS NAME IS AN ENDURING NAME. Infidels and other enemies of the Saviour say that his name cannot be permitted to remain on the earth — that it must go! On the other hand, there are millions of his followers who vow that it will remain even at the cost of their lives. Some years ago an infidel said, "In fifty years the influence of Jesus will be erased from the earth." But let the same infidel attempt to erase Christ from history and art and poetry, and he will soon discover that he has the "rock of ages and a very dull chisel"!

Think of what one would be compelled to do before he could blot Jesus out of history. He would be compelled to destroy all the prophecy written before he was born. Moses, David, Isaiah and Daniel wrote about him. They told of his birth, his suffering, his trial, the words he uttered on the cross, and many other things about him hundreds of years before he came to the earth.

To destroy the name of Jesus on earth one would be compelled to destroy every Bible on the face of the earth. Go yonder among the ice and snow covered Alps, and bring forth the precious old Book that the Christians lost while fleeing from the heartless Roman Catholics. Go to the "City of the Dead," and bring forth the old Book that was hidden there while the Christians were being persecuted by the Roman emperors. The lonely missionary in India has the dear old Book. Go gather every copy; burn them; burn every

trace of his name on paper! Is his name gone to be heard no more? Not so! There are enough houses of worship that proclaim his name to make, if gathered together, a city far more magnificent than Paris. Pile these houses five miles high,—let the enemy apply the torch. “Let the infidels laugh as the flames shoot towards the stars, but his name is not erased from the earth.” Upon million after million of human hearts his name is engraved. His name will live on

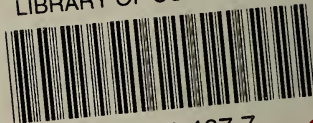
“Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.”

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2006

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 646 467 7